

The African Communist

NO 90 THIRD QUARTER 1982

SAY 'NO' TO WAR!

A black and white photograph of a nuclear mushroom cloud explosion, with the word 'WAR!' in large red letters at the bottom.

INKULULEKO PUBLICATIONS

Distributors of *The African Communist*

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

AFRICA	<i>£2.00 per year including postage</i> <i>£7.50 airmail per year</i> (Readers in Nigeria can subscribe by sending 4 Naira to KPS Bookshop PMB 1023, Afikpo, Imo State)
BRITAIN	<i>£3.00 per year including postage</i>
NORTH AMERICA	<i>\$8.00 per year including postage</i> <i>\$15.00 airmail per year</i>
ALL OTHER COUNTRIES	<i>£3.00 per year including postage</i> <i>£7.50 airmail per year</i>

INKULULEKO PUBLICATIONS, 39 Goodge Street, London W1P 1FD
ISSN 0001-9976

Phototypesetting and artwork by Carlinpoint Ltd. (T.U.)
5 Dryden Street, London WC2

Printed by Interdruck Leipzig

THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

Published quarterly in the interests of African solidarity, and as a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought throughout our Continent, by the South African Communist Party

No 90 Third Quarter 1982

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EDITORIAL NOTES



SAY "NO" TO WAR!

The world is in an extremely dangerous state and nothing illustrates this better than the crisis which has blown up over the Falklands/Malvinas. What at first appeared to be a small matter affecting the lives only of 1,500 "kelpers" and half a million sheep turned out to be of vital importance to the world's greatest powers, many of whom became directly involved. As the conflict extended, lives were lost and ships and aircraft destroyed, passions mounted on all sides and the threat to world peace became obvious.

The legal rights of the disputing parties could obviously be determined definitively by the International Court at the Hague — as was done, for example, in the case of Namibia — but just as South Africa ignored the Court's verdict, so the court would be unable to settle the Falklands/Malvinas dispute unless both parties were prepared to accept its verdict. The negotiations preceding the Falklands fighting showed that these preconditions were absent.

Argentina bases its claim to the Falklands/Malvinas on the fact that the islands were seized from them by force in 1833 and they have never ceased to demand them back. Britain claims the Falklands/Malvinas are today her territory, inhabited solely not by a subjugated colonial population demanding the right of self-determination, nor by Argentinians demanding union with the mainland, but by people of British descent who want to remain under British rule, even though under Britain's latest nationality law most of them would enjoy the status of second class citizens if they ever decided to return "home".

The issue of sovereignty over the Falklands/Malvinas has been before the United Nations for years. The islands have been included in the UN list of territories due to be decolonised. In 1965 the UN General Assembly recommended both parties to the dispute to bring about decolonisation through negotiation. After 17 years of British procrastination Argentina lost patience and took over the islands by force.

The UN Security Council decided unanimously that all hostilities should cease forthwith and that Argentina should withdraw her forces from the island. Four countries, including the Soviet Union, abstained on the vote, but the Soviet Union did not cast its veto. Both Britain and Argentina failed to implement the UN resolution, the former insisting on troop withdrawal and the latter on acceptance of its right to sovereignty before there could be any question of negotiations. Nothing in the UN resolution, however, justified the British resort to force in an attempt to overcome the impasse.

In the issues of war and peace and the curbing of imperialism, no one can afford to adopt a neutral stance. It is true that Argentina has been governed by a fascist military junta which ran the country by terror, torture and murder in the interests of a handful of landowners and big businessmen. On the other hand, imperialist Britain has no inherent right to control the islands, which belong naturally on strategic, geographical and economic grounds to the South American mainland. It may be argued that no vital interests are involved for either side justifying war and the

heavy loss of life. But the very intensity of the passions aroused on all sides demonstrates that in today's world no island anywhere, however small, is without significance in the global context, and no dispute can be properly evaluated unless viewed against the background of the international conflict between the imperialist powers defending the outworn system of capitalism, and the anti-imperialist forces, socialist and non-aligned, fighting their way forward to a world free from exploitation and national oppression.

Seen in this context, it is clear that Britain did not decide to fight over the Falklands/Malvinas purely out of a sense of injured pride, or to punish aggression, or in defence of human rights, or for the right of self-determination of a subject people or for any other of the high-minded reasons which have been poured out by her propaganda media. The huge loss of life and enormous material damage involved, the concentration of almost the whole of Britain's naval and air strike force plus thousands of marines, the staggering expenditure — all this was not ventured for the sake of 1,500 kelpers and half a million sheep. After all, Britain removed the entire population of Diego Garcia — greater than that of the Falklands/Malvinas — without a referendum or so much as a "by your leave", to make possible the construction of a gigantic US military base in the Indian Ocean directed against the Soviet Union. And in her South Atlantic expedition, Britain was backed by the United States and, less enthusiastically, by the EEC for much the same reason. When the fighting in the Falklands/Malvinas is over, the imperialists undoubtedly hope that the outcome will be a permanent US/British presence on the islands, which would be a key element in the South Atlantic Treaty Organisation they have been trying to cobble together for many years. There is also the possibility that such a body would have a South African connection, if not direct involvement. And there is no doubt it is part of US/British policy to have in power in Buenos Aires a compliant government with which the imperialists can also co-operate in such a project. In addition to the vital military/strategic value of the Falklands/Malvinas to the imperialist powers, powerful economic interests are at stake. There have been reports of enormous oil deposits waiting development in the area. There is also the whole question of access to and control over the immense resources of Antarctica. Possession of the Falklands/Malvinas and South Georgia would give the imperialists a dominant position in the South Atlantic.

US Policy in Ruins

Despite these considerations, however, the outbreak of hostilities between Britain and Argentina was a disastrous setback for US foreign policy. In the eyes of the Reagan administration, the only politics which make sense are the politics of anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism, and everything they do is conditioned by the need to prepare both their own people and their allies for a military showdown with the Soviet Union which they rightly regard as the heartland of the world anti-imperialist forces. Reagan's policy of "linkage" is a policy of evaluating every issue in relation to his overriding anti-Soviet crusade. Nor is this a personal aberration. In 1980, after the overthrow of the vicious regime of the Shah, Nixon's sidekick Henry Kissinger said in a speech in Washington:

"Iran should teach us that humane values are not necessarily served by the overthrow of conservative regimes. If we encourage upheavals without putting in their place a moderate democratic alternative, a foreign policy conducted in the name of justice and human rights could wind up by making the world safe for anti-American radicalism".

Successive American administrations have taken this argument to its logical conclusion by backing inhumane and fascist regimes because the alternatives would be radical and anti-American. Thus the United States has backed fascist regimes everywhere in Latin America, regarding them as reliable allies in the global fight against communism. The US took steps to overthrow the democratically elected Allende government in Chile because it was moving in a socialist direction. The US is at present attempting to destabilise the government of Nicaragua and is involved in defending the fascist regime in El Salvador for the same reason. The US had been hoping to make use of Argentinian troops and hardware in Central America and elsewhere to put down guerilla movements fighting for democracy and an end to neo-colonialist domination.

Similar policies are followed by the US in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Both Botha and Pol Pot are welcomed as allies by the US because the alternatives — an independent Namibia with a SWAPO government, a South Africa governed on the lines of the Freedom Charter, and a socialist, democratic and non-aligned Kampuchea — are unacceptable to the Reagan administration.

It is hardly surprising that the consequence of US foreign policy is to make liberation movements everywhere radical, anti-American and anti-imperialist. The fighting over the Falklands/Malvinas which compelled the Americans to declare their support for the British cause, inevitably led

all of Latin America and a good many other countries throughout the world to adopt an anti-American and anti-imperialist stance. The imperialists had shown their true colours. Everyone could see that the interests of imperialism are in conflict with the desire of the peoples of the developing world for liberation and national independence. Everyone who did not already know it was being taught in the crucible of war that anti-communism and anti-Sovietism are an instrument of capitalism and of the military-industrial complex which profits from it and which is everywhere attempting to hold back the forces of social change. The war in the South Atlantic has set in motion social forces which neither the US and British imperialists nor their satellite regimes will be able to control. Inside Argentina itself the war galvanised into action revolutionary forces for which the Galtieri regime had never bargained.

Anti-Soviet campaign

As the ramshackle anti-Soviet alliance world-wide began to creak and groan under the strain of the Falklands/Malvinas conflict, the British and Americans tried their best to drag in the Soviet bogey as a justification for their stand. The Soviet Union was proclaimed to be supporting the Galtieri regime, Soviet ships were spying on the British fleet, information gathered from Soviet satellites was being passed on to Buenos Aires, etc. American commentators stressed that the Soviet Union bought huge amounts of grain from Argentina, conveniently ignoring the fact that the Soviet Union also buys huge amounts of grain from the United States without regarding this as a token of support for the Reagan regime. In fact the Soviet Union behaved throughout the Falklands/Malvinas crisis with the utmost propriety, its policies determined by opposition to imperialism and principled support for the cause of true independence and social advance in Latin America as elsewhere in the world.

There is no denying, however, that the cause of peace and disarmament, which has been consistently upheld by the Soviet Union ever since its foundation, has been greatly strengthened in the wake of the senseless fighting and loss of life in the South Atlantic. As the crisis deepened, as the toll in men and material grew greater and the danger mounted that the area of confrontation would widen, dragging nation after nation into the maw of death and destruction, a powerful impetus was given to the world-wide campaign for peace and nuclear disarmament. The exchanges of fire across the wintry seas, the demonstrations of explosive push-button technology and sudden devastation, shocked complacent millions,

especially in the imperialist countries, into a realisation that the far more serious threat of a nuclear exchange between the great powers was something that humanity could no longer tolerate. There were already wars raging in the Middle East, Central America, Asia and Africa, but now for the first time since the Vietnam war a nuclear power was involved and the threat was raised that nuclear weapons might be used. More and more millions have been drawn into mass demonstrations and other forms of militant protest against the escalation of nuclear armament.

It is a fact of political life that from 1917 onwards all serious initiatives for disarmament have come from Moscow and been ignored or evaded by the imperialist powers because they have never given up their dream of overthrowing the Soviet state and putting an end to the existence of real socialism. Throughout the 20s and 30s the Soviet Union put forward plans for disarmament and collective security in the face of the fascist advance in Europe and Asia, but all proposals were rejected. The result was World War 2 and the loss of 30 million lives, whereas had the Soviet proposals been accepted the fascist aggression could have been prevented at minimum cost.

Now again in the years since World War 2 we have seen the imperialist powers arming themselves to the teeth in the face of a mythical "Soviet threat", while Soviet proposals for disarmament have been ignored. At the recent Madrid continuation conference to review the 1975 Helsinki agreement on European security, Soviet attempts to concentrate attention on the need to prevent war were brushed aside, while the western powers devoted all their demagoguery to the question of alleged violation of "human rights" in the socialist countries. The Geneva talks between the Soviet Union and the United States on the limitation of nuclear weapons which began at the end of November 1981 have been dragged out by the Reagan administration in the hope that they will be able to get their 600 new medium-range missiles deployed in Europe before any decision is reached. The SALT 2 agreement between the two countries has still not been ratified by the United States on unspecified grounds that it is "deficient".

Meanwhile the Soviet Union has again and again demonstrated that it is deadly serious about the need to disarm if war is to be avoided. It has taken unilateral decisions to reduce its capacity to wage war in the hope that the US will follow suit. It unilaterally withdrew 20,000 troops and their weaponry from the German Democratic Republic, but met with no response. It introduced unilaterally a moratorium on the deployment of

medium range nuclear weapons in the European part of the USSR, equally with no response. Nobody can deny that these moves by the Soviet Union are concessions. An increase in the Soviet military presence in the GDR, an increase in the number of medium-range nuclear weapons in the European part of the Soviet Union would undoubtedly represent an increase in Soviet fire-power to the disadvantage of the West. But the US alleges these concessions are a fraud and a deception intended to preserve an alleged Soviet superiority in the military sphere, and insists that its own plans to instal a whole range of new nuclear weapons in Europe must continue.

The anti-Soviet obsession of the US and its intransigence in the matter of nuclear disarmament have alarmed many of its allies in NATO who fear Europe will be the epicentre of any nuclear conflict and who prefer peaceful coexistence and detente to war and annihilation. Above all, the inflexibility of the Reagan administration is moving the masses of people everywhere, in all walks of life in all countries, to join the anti-war crusade which now enjoys more and better organised popular support than ever before in history. The imperialist warmongers are trying to counter this development in two ways: 1. Reagan has suddenly sponsored a START plan as a counter to SALT in a bid to head off criticism that he is not serious about nuclear disarmament; and 2. Reagan and his NATO allies are trying to identify the anti-war movement with treason and to prevent any link between the peace-loving forces in the west and in the socialist countries.

We in South Africa have no reason to be deceived by the propaganda of the imperialists. We know that the western powers, despite their oft-proclaimed "abhorrence" of apartheid, are amongst the firmest allies of the Botha regime, which protects their heavy investment in the whole of Southern Africa. We know also that the western powers have consistently failed to take any effective action to enforce UN decisions aimed at ending apartheid rule in South Africa and the illegal occupation of Namibia. It is the western powers which veto Security Council resolutions calling for the imposition of sanctions against South Africa. Of the 16 resolutions on apartheid adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1981, the US voted "no" on no fewer than 13 occasions, and the record of the other western powers was scarcely better. By their deeds these countries show they are not our friends, but the friends of our enemies.

The US policy on nuclear weapons, on relations with the Soviet Union, on the question of national liberation, is clearly one of "linkage" of all issues, not merely to defend the remaining bastions of capitalism, but to

win back lost territory and extend the imperialist dominion over the whole globe. We in the national liberation movement in South Africa can only succeed if we adopt a counter-policy of linkage — of linking our freedom fight with the global fight against imperialism, with the fight for peace and against nuclear war, with the fight for progressive social advance throughout the world, with the ending of the anarchy and madness of capitalism and the creation of a new socialist order in which national and class oppression, the source of international conflict and war, will be ended once and for all.

McCARTHY RIDES AGAIN

A new McCarthyite witch-hunt has started up in the United States. It is being conducted by the US Senate Sub-Committee on Security and Terrorism, which earlier this year held sessions under the chairmanship of Senator Jeremiah Denton to investigate the activities of the ANC and SWAPO. Most of the evidence placed before the committee seemed to have been supplied by the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, which declared itself delighted with the proceedings. Most of the witnesses were renegades from the ANC and SWAPO, and included the notorious Bartholomew Hlapane, who sold Nelson Mandela and Bram Fischer down the river; "Advocate" Kozonguizi, the former London layabout, now an adviser to the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance in Namibia; and a disturbed female called Nokonono Kave whose ravings were accepted as gospel by Denton although she was obviously in need of urgent psychiatric attention. Evidence was also given by US Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker, who condemned what he called the "terrorist activities" and other "violent efforts" of SWAPO and the ANC who, he claimed, received 90% of their military support and 60% of their overall support from the Soviet Union and other Communist sources.

In his closing remarks at the end of the hearings, Senator Denton said their purpose had been, not to debate US policy towards Southern Africa, but "to determine. . . the extent to which the USSR has successfully penetrated and come to control the African National Congress and the

South West Africa People's Organisation. This has served to illustrate once again the Soviet Union's support for terrorism under the guise of aiding struggles for national liberation. The evidence we have reviewed is deeply disturbing. It suggests strongly that the original purposes of the two organisations have been subverted and that the Soviets and their allies have achieved alarmingly effective control over them".

In a statement on the commission's proceedings, the African National Congress said:

"The derogatory reference by Dr Crocker to the just struggle for national independence waged by the national liberation movements as 'terrorism' is but a feeble attempt by the Reagan Administration at concealing its role as the mainstay of terrorist regimes throughout the world. This Administration, which has self-righteously proclaimed its mission to be the fight against international terrorism, spends huge sums of dollars to prop up fascist dictatorships such as those in El Salvador to continue with their genocidal policies. It is also the same Administration which supports the Pretoria racists not only to conduct a reign of terror against the majority of the people in our country, but also to carry these acts of terror into the neighbouring states with complete disregard for life and property.

Neither the ANC nor the Soviet Union made any secret about the selfless support that the Soviet Union, the Socialist Community and the progressive forces the world over are granting to the people fighting against oppression, exploitation and human degradation.

What, then, is the real objective behind this 'revelation' of Soviet assistance to the liberation movements?

For the people of South Africa the latest manoeuvres of the Reagan Administration in Central America are instructive. US imperialism, having failed in its machinations to subdue the people of Cuba and to reverse their revolutionary gains, was confronted with yet another humiliating defeat with the triumph of the struggle of the people of Nicaragua. Added to these defeats the US Administration is now confronted with the increasing tempo of popular struggles, namely in El Salvador and other countries in the region. In response to these developments the US Administration has adopted a desperate and aggressive stance towards Cuba and Nicaragua.

Similarly, in Southern Africa, imperialism which has suffered great losses as a result of the victories of the revolutionary struggles waged in the region, seeks to reverse these advances by throwing its full weight behind the racist Pretoria regime.

Fearing the destruction of its stronghold in Africa by the liberation forces led by the ANC and SWAPO, imperialism now seeks to find a pretext for its aggression in the region. However this time the excuse for intervention is not Cuba or Nicaragua, but the Soviet Union for its assistance to the liberation movements. It is now clear that the strategy of international imperialism, in particular the United States, is to suppress the liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia, and to use the racist South African regime to attack the front line states for their assistance to our cause.

The ANC therefore calls on progressive mankind to condemn these dirty manoeuvres by the United States and to give all possible support to the national liberation movements and to the front line states in our sub-continent. For our part we in the ANC shall not rest until we destroy the apartheid monster and create a South Africa that will stand for peace, democracy and social progress."

After the hearings, the chief counsel of the Senate sub-committee Joel Lisker announced: "Now we will move on to phase 2 which will involve a series of hearings to measure how much support from America reaches groups such as the ANC and SWAPO — or the IRA for that matter. The ultimate aim is to introduce legislation to make it a criminal offence for support from the US to go to such terror organisations".

So the aim of the sub-committee is to undermine, not only the cause of liberation in Southern Africa and elsewhere in the world, but also all progressive organisations and individuals in the United States which support it. If anything, it is a greater threat to the cause of freedom in America than to us in Southern Africa.

The Washington correspondent of the *Johannesburg Star* wrote: "The Senator is regarded sometimes as a 'Rightwing nut' but there is no doubt about his seriousness". McCarthy and Hitler were also rightwing nuts, but there is no doubt either about their seriousness, their dangerousness and the massive damage they caused to humanity before they were finally disposed of. It is to be hoped that Denton and his allies will be stopped in their tracks before their monstrous inquisition has gone much further.

THE WHITE FRONT CRACKS

The split in the ranks of the Nationalist Party brought about earlier this year by the breakaway of Dr Andries Treurnicht and 15 other ultra-right wing MP's (the so-called "verkrampies") followed by the formation of the Conservative Party represents another stage in the erosion of the front of white supremacy in South Africa. Ostensibly the break has taken place over the issue of "power sharing", that is, Premier Botha's plans for including Coloureds and Asians in some form of constitutional dispensation for "white" South Africa. At the time the split took place those plans were not even spelled out. The State President's Council, the advisory body of 60 members chaired by the State Vice-President which

had been appointed by Botha to replace the Senate, had been asked to produce a formula but had not yet presented its first report. But obviously whatever report emerged from the State President's Council would have had its origin in the Nationalist Party, and the verkramptes knew enough to be satisfied that the recommendations of the Council were unacceptable to them.

When he first took office, Botha appealed to the whites to "adapt or die" in the face of the challenge which was being presented to them, to make concessions in the hope of heading off the forces of revolution. He has repeated this call many times since then. During this year's session of Parliament, in the debate on his budget vote, he said "anyone who did not see the need for reform or renewal in South Africa was embalmed -- and you know what that means". A government had to adapt to deal with new problems because time stood still for no one. He went so far as to stress that any solution to the question of political rights for Coloureds and Asians had to include joint decision-making and responsibility on all levels of government. The report of the State President's Council which was presented on May 12 makes it clear that Botha's strategy does not provide for any form of effective participation by the African majority in any constitutional dispensation. Africans are not represented on the State President's Council, which contains only a handful of Coloured and Asian stooges and is dominated by whites. The State President's Council recommendations also make it clear that white supremacy will be maintained in whatever new set-up emerges from the debate which will be taking place during the remainder of this year.

To the black majority of South Africans neither Botha nor the State President's Council offers anything of substance. The Africans, who constitute over 70% of the total population, will have no place in the new Parliament which is under construction, though some token representation (in what precise form is unclear) is proposed at local level in the seven main urban areas. In effect, the Africans are expected to be satisfied with the Bantustans, covering 13% of the land mass, plus the ultimate loss of their South African citizenship. But even to the Coloureds and Asians the Government is offering only a sleeping partnership in the firm whose main objective is the dispossession of the African majority and their disbarment from any effective say in the running of the country. It should be made clear that the Coloured and Indian peoples have seen the Botha constitutional proposals for what they are -- a ploy to wean them away from the Africans in the ever-growing unity in action of all the black

peoples against apartheid, and as a sinister attempt to weaken the national liberation movement. The overwhelming majority of both communities have rejected the proposals out of hand. The handful of Coloureds and Asians who serve on the State President's Council do not enjoy the confidence of their people and are seen as mere instruments of the regime.

To placate the "verkramptes" Botha has even retracted the term "power sharing", first substituting the expression "healthy power-sharing" and then stating that he preferred the concept of "co-responsibility". This at least amounts to an admission that the whole scheme is a fraud. The white minority will retain the reality of power in their hands; the Coloureds and Asians are expected to make do with the shadow.

It is this shadow, nevertheless, which has frightened Treurnicht and his supporters into rebellion, where they have been joined by disgraced former Premier B.J. Vorster and disgraced former Cabinet Minister Connie Mulder and sundry other extreme right-wing groups. How extensive this rebellion will become remains to be seen. Botha has called a federal congress of the Nationalist Party in Bloemfontein on July 30 and 31 in a bid to use his existing majority in the Nationalist Party to secure endorsement for his plans. If he fails to get what he regards as an acceptable majority, he has said he will refer the matter to a referendum of the entire white electorate — and it is this which indicates just how serious the split in the Nationalist Party has become.

For if it needs a referendum to settle a dispute in the ranks of Afrikanerdom, this means that the Nationalist Party has ceased to be what it has been ever since the 1948 election victory — the main bastion of white domination. The ruling group inside the Nationalist Party will have had to appeal outside the Party for support to push its proposals through. The national cement which has held the Party together will have crumbled.

Afrikaner Nationalism

The victory of Dr Malan in the 1948 general election was at least partly fuelled by a wave of Afrikaner nationalism. This flowed from the inferior position of the Afrikaners vis-a-vis the English-speaking section of the whites. The exercise of power has to some extent redressed the balance. In 1910 per capita incomes among English-speaking whites were three times those of Afrikaners, by 1948 the proportion was still three to two; today there is almost equivalence. The Nationalist Government used its power to promote not only the interests of the whites as a whole at the expense of the

blacks, but also those of the Afrikaners within the white community. By the beginning of 1982 the Afrikaner bourgeoisie had risen to a position of dominance in South Africa, still smaller than the English in the private sector, but controlling the public sector which plays the determinant role in the raising and allocation of capital resources. They were the dominant force in Parliament, the state corporations, the civil service, the military and police forces. They had won their republic with all its chauvinistic symbols.

In their search for bigger profits and wider markets the Afrikaner bourgeoisie have increasingly struggled to escape from the nationalistic strait jacket. They have entered into association with non-Afrikaner local and foreign capital. In the interests of increasing the mobility and productivity of labour, they have joined the non-Afrikaans bourgeoisie in stressing the economic indivisibility of the country and the iniquity of the pass laws and job reservation. Today most sections of the Afrikaner bourgeoisie realise that the relations of production in South Africa make it impossible to make maximum use of the country's productive capacity.

It was Marx who pointed out that the bourgeoisie in Europe, in its fight to capture the market and secure control of the state, fought for democracy, the right to vote, the right to education for all, in order to gain the power to break the shackles of feudalism and open the way to economic expansion. In this fight the bourgeoisie mobilised the support of the working classes, who naturally stood to gain from the abolition of the power and privilege of the landed aristocracy. But when their power was consolidated, the bourgeoisie turned their backs on the workers and the class struggle was intensified in a new form. Something of the same sort is happening amongst the Afrikaners in South Africa today. It is the conflict of class interests inside the Nationalist Party which is tearing it apart. It was the Afrikaner workers, organised by Albert Hertzog and his friends, who provided the decisive votes which brought the Nationalist Party to power in 1948. Today it is the Afrikaner workers, on the mines or in the lower echelons of the civil service and the permanent security forces, plus a greatly diminished farming element, who are giving their support to the Conservative Party and the HNP because they are not willing to abandon the traditional race policies of the Nationalist Party, still feeling themselves threatened by black advancement in any sphere.

Looking for Allies

Botha, as the spokesman of the Afrikaner bourgeoisie, is casting about for allies in his fight to "adapt". There is talk in the press today of a possible

coalition with the Progressive Federal Party and other opposition elements among the whites. And Botha's tentative approach to the Coloureds and Asians is part of the process of "adaptation". There are even sections of the Nationalist press which have openly proclaimed the need to start a dialogue with the African National Congress. On the issue of "power sharing" Nationalist Afrikanerdom is being polarised on class lines. The bourgeoisie, which is dominant in the state apparatus and the economy, is now finding irksome the restraints imposed on it by the colour bar constitution, trapped, just as Smuts was trapped 40 years ago, by their inability to appeal outside the ranks of the white electorate. The constitutional changes Botha has already introduced — the scrapping of the Senate, the admission of nominated members to the House of Assembly, the extension of his power to rule by administrative proclamation rather than by legislation — have seriously undermined whatever authority Parliament enjoyed in the eyes of the whites. His National Security Council, on which sit his key Cabinet Ministers and the police and military chiefs, is a potential alternative to the existing executive, answerable to no one but himself. The editor of the Afrikaans newspaper *Beeld*, Ton Vosloo, in the issue of April 2nd, 1982, openly called for the scrapping of Parliament and the establishment of a new system involving all races to solve South Africa's political problems. The military was increasingly involving itself in the affairs of state. Now the State President's Council has recommended the creation of a new executive system separating the Cabinet from Parliament and giving the State President the power to appoint and dismiss ministers, initiate legislation and dissolve the legislature, arousing fears that government can degenerate into a dictatorship more absolute than it already is, threatening the possible use of force, to impose Botha's "total strategy" on his recalcitrant followers.

The essence of the crisis in which the regime finds itself is that there is no way out within the limits of white supremacy. Every step taken by Botha to solve the problem of Namibian independence or "power sharing" in South Africa has produced only greater disunity in white ranks, while at the same time providing no acceptable response to the demands of the oppressed black masses. Botha is right in drawing attention to the "total onslaught" to which his regime is being subjected by the revolutionary forces, but wrong in his assessment of their nature and equally wrong in thinking that his "total strategy" can bring results. The people are not going to be fobbed off with fake "power sharing" and Bantustans which leave white domination intact at a time when they are demanding full

citizenship and equal rights for all in a unitary South Africa, least of all at a time when, under the leadership of the ANC and SWAPO, the people's struggle throughout Southern Africa — on the battlefields, in the factories, in street demonstrations and jail protests, everywhere — is daily reaching new heights of intensity.

Hopelessly inadequate though they are, the proposals for change emanating from Botha and his State President's Council have achieved two important results:

1. They have split the Nationalist Party beyond repair, smashed white unity to smithereens and set the various parties at one another's throats like a pack of wild dogs; and

2. They have demonstrated that the main drive for real change is coming from the people's liberation movement, whose programme, the Freedom Charter, is the only possible alternative to the status quo. Botha's intensification of repression at home and aggression abroad prove that his "reforms" are stimulated, not by the promptings of a kind heart, but by the desperate necessity to head off the South African revolution before it overwhelms him.

Our answer must be to step up our offensive on all fronts, to win and organise support from wider and wider sections of the people, of all races and colours, until final victory is won. The present confusion and pessimism in enemy ranks is proof that the labour and the wounds are not in vain. The end is in sight.

SAVE OUR PRISONERS

At the time of writing six South African freedom fighters are in the death cells in Pretoria prison after being sentenced to hang for "treason". Three of them — Johnson Lubisi, Petrus Mashigo and Naphtali Manana — were sentenced to death in November 1980. On April 7 this year their appeals were rejected by the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein and now only an intervention by the State President can save them from the gallows. Three others — Johannes Shabangu, Anthony Tsotsobe and David Moise — were sentenced to death on August 19, 1981, and are awaiting the outcome of their appeals. There are other freedom fighters before the courts on charges which may result in the imposition of further death penalties.

The African National Congress has signed the Geneva protocol calling for prisoner of war status for all captured freedom fighters, and has received international support for its stand. But the racist regime has refused to sign.

Prisoners in danger of hanging for political offences in South Africa have been saved before now by pressure of public opinion, both local and international, and it is of the utmost urgency that the campaign for reprieve of the six be intensified if their lives are to be saved.

An emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council convened on April 9 unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the South African authorities to commute the death sentences on Lubisi, Mashigo and Manana. The Security Council also decided to call on all states and organisations to take urgent steps to save the lives of the three freedom fighters. It is to be hoped that, if the appeal of the other three is turned down, the Security Council will take similar action on their behalf. Representations for clemency have also been made by a number of other world leaders, including President Rene of the Seychelles, target of a South African-backed coup attempt last year. The voice of Africa must be heard loud and clear on this issue.

There are clear signs that the world is becoming increasingly fed up with the vengeful intransigence of the racist South African regime over the treatment of political prisoners — not only captured freedom fighters but all those convicted under one or other of the battery of security laws, as well as those detained without trial and frequently tortured or murdered in their cells. 1,400 mayors in 32 countries earlier this year signed an appeal to South Africa to free all political prisoners unconditionally. "Release of such prisoners from long years of imprisonment would help to bring about a spirit of reconciliation", read the appeal signed by each mayor. "I hereby proclaim my support and feelings of solidarity with political detainees in South Africa and call in particular for the immediate release of Nelson Mandela". Other similar appeals have received widespread support internationally.

But again the response of the South African regime has been one of intransigence. Speaking in Parliament on March 24 this year, the Minister of Justice, H.J. Coetsee, said political prisoners were in "a category of their own" and none of the normal provisions for remission of sentence or parole could apply. The interests of the community and the state were paramount, he said.

This stance of uncompromising harshness towards political prisoners is unacceptable to progressive humanity. 1982 is the 20th year of Nelson

Mandela's incarceration, and next year will mark the 20th anniversary of the arrest of the freedom fighters who were with him in the Rivonia trial. Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Raymond Mhlaba and Andrew Mlangeni were secretly removed on April 1st this year from Robben Island to Pollsmoor prison near Cape Town for unspecified "administrative reasons". There remain 386 political prisoners serving various sentences on Robben Island, and the total number of convicted political prisoners in all South African jails is well over 500. Thirty-seven of them are serving life sentences, which means that if the racist regime has its way they will remain in prison until they die. In addition there are the unknown hundreds of political prisoners detained without trial under various security laws.

It is vital that the Botha regime should not have its way, that our condemned comrades should be saved, and that all political prisoners should be released, but if these objectives are to be achieved, a massive campaign must be organised world-wide to ensure that the racists are made to feel the full weight of international condemnation for their vicious apartheid policies and practices.

The political prisoners have never abandoned their posts. In spite of every handicap, humiliation and disability heaped on them by their jailers, they have remained militant, united and active in the fight for freedom. They have struggled to overcome every obstacle in their determination to make the fullest possible contribution to the cause of liberation.

These, our proudest and staunchest warriors, must never be abandoned or forgotten by their comrades. We cannot rest or slacken our endeavours while they remain in prison, their lives in danger from hangman, warder or security police thug. We call on all progressives everywhere to take action now to help save these comrades. Meetings, demonstrations, petitions, pamphlets, stickers – all means of propaganda must be used to publicise their plight. Governments must be moved to intervene. No stone must be left unturned in this campaign. Victory on the prison front is as vital to our cause as on the field of battle.

THE VANGUARD PARTY IN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

By T. Singh

“Our Party won for itself by deeds the role, the name and the power of the vanguard.”¹

The ideas relating to the vanguard party are most closely associated with the name of V.I. Lenin. And rightly so. Lenin, after all, not only inspired Russian revolutionaries with the necessity for such a party in the struggle for socialism, but worked unceasingly for its creation. Such a party was formed in Russia at the turn of the century — a revolutionary, working-class party armed with the ideas of Marx and Engels, and inspired by Lenin's teachings on “the party of a special type”. It became the indispensable instrument for the victory of the Russian proletarian, peasant and other downtrodden masses over Tsarism and for the creation and consolidation of the first socialist state in the world.

In the course of this struggle, against the many diverse trends, political and ideological, of the Russia of his time Lenin elaborated a unified body of ideas about "the organisation of revolutionaries", about its character and special role, which together constitutes the theory of the revolutionary vanguard. What is our understanding of this theory and its application to the South African revolution? Have the propositions about such a party, tested in the battles that Russian Marxists fought, only a particular validity, or international? How do we locate the South African Communist Party within this theory?

It is necessary to place Lenin's unique contribution in the context of the development of Marxism to appreciate its real significance.

The Manifesto and the League of Communists

It would be erroneous to believe that the founders of scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, concerned themselves solely with its theory. It was Marx, after all, who declared:

"The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it."²

Theory is a guide to action. And theory has to be firmly rooted in a real, material world organised in a particular way. Lenin explained the gist of this theory in the following simple way:

"We want to achieve a new and better order of society: in this new and better society there must be neither rich nor poor; all will have to work. Not a handful of rich people, but all the working people must enjoy the fruits of their common labour. Machines and other improvements must serve to ease the work of all and not enable a few to grow rich at the expense of millions and tens of millions of people. This new and better society is called *socialist society*. The teachings about this society are called *socialism*. That is a great cause, and to that cause it is worth devoting one's whole life."³

The theory also identified the working class as the decisive force "essential for the triumph of the social revolution and its ultimate goal, the abolition of classes."⁴

In the Manifesto this point is driven home:

"Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class."⁵

In those early years of the anti-capitalist struggle very few fighters and organisations believed in mass struggle or, like Marx and Engels, that the liberation of the working class must be the task of the working class. More than this, the main problem was the organisation of the working class into an independent political party that would transform it from "a

class *in itself*, which it objectively is, into “a class *for itself*” The experience of struggle gained in the fight against the bosses of capital was not sufficient, because

“Revolution is a supreme political act, and he who wants revolution must also want political action, which paves the way for the revolution, trains the workers for the revolution and without which the workers are sure to be cheated...”⁶

To avoid this,

“... the politics in question must be proletarian politics. The workers’ party must not play tail to any bourgeois parties; it must constitute itself *as an independent party with its own goal and its own policy.*”⁷ (our emphasis)

The logic of this approach to the socialist revolution led to the formation by Marx and Engels of the first truly proletarian party — The League of Communists. The purpose of the League was

“to employ all means of propaganda and political struggle to destroy the old society — and *to overthrow the bourgeoisie* — to liberate the proletariat spiritually, politically and economically, and to carry through a communist revolution.”⁸

The need for alliance with other movements of the working people was clearly recognised and the relationship of the League to these was spelt out in the Manifesto:

“In the various stages of the proletariat’s struggle the League always represents the interests of the movement as a whole; it strives always to unite and organise all the revolutionary forces of the proletariat around itself.”⁹

Communists therefore have the task of *acting with* all the forces and movements directed against the exploiting system. They are the most “resolute section of the working class parties... which pushes forward all others”¹⁰, because they have the ideological advantage of being able to grasp clearly “the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement”.¹¹ For communists, unity, and never sectarianism, is the key to the policy of alliance, provided that “the proletarian class character of the Party is not jeopardised thereby. For me this is the absolute limit.”¹²

The Paris Commune which established the first brief episode of working class power in the world brought to the fore yet another of the burning issues of any revolution — the nature of the new state. This is how Engels characterised its solution:

"From the very outset the Commune was compelled to recognise that the working class, once come to power, *could not go on managing with the old state machine*; that in order not to lose again its only just conquered supremacy, this working class must, on the one hand *do away with all* the old repressive machinery previously used against itself..."¹³

In all this we can discern the fundamental features and role of the vanguard party, although the term itself was not used by Marx and Engels. The Leninist Party which emerged subsequently, and the revolutionary communist parties of today including the South African Party, have their roots in the class and ideological battles of those early years.

In the course of development of capitalism and the working class movement, however, many new theoretical, ideological, tactical and organisational problems emerged, some of which Marx and Engels could not foresee, others with a greater impact. The party created by Lenin and the Bolsheviks grew out of the struggles to resolve these problems and therein lies Lenin's unique contribution to the international communist movement and our understanding of the character and role of the vanguard party.

Lenin's ideas on the vanguard have very little to do with the formal aspects of organisation and concentrate mainly on its theoretical basis and politics.

The Role of Theory

For Lenin the starting point of the social revolution rests on the twin fundamentals of a revolutionary theory (Marxism) and a revolutionary working-class party (the vanguard Party). He defined this inseparability:

"In his struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation... the proletariat can, and inevitably will, become an invincible force only through its ideological unification on the principles of Marxism being reinforced by the material unity of organisation, which welds millions of toilers into an army of the working class. Neither the senile rule of the Russian autocracy nor the senescent rule of international capital will be able to withstand this army."¹⁴

The vanguard party therefore is the dialectical unity of the working class with socialism. The only guarantee that the revolutionary organisation of the working class will not lose sight of the strategic objective of socialism, or lose its identity as an independent party, is its adherence to and reliance upon Marxism.

"The role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory."¹⁵

The supreme duty of Marxist revolutionaries lies in applying and developing this theory to the specific conditions of their own struggle. Not mechanically, for that will reduce Marxism to a dogma, but creatively.

An instance of the creative application and development of Marxism is the theory of South African revolution advanced by the South African Communist Party. It is not something simply thought up by those calling themselves Marxists. It *grew out of* the sum-total of the revolutionary experience of South African freedom fighters over many decades. Not only the ideas and experience of communists who have been in the front ranks of the struggle, but of all the patriots genuinely seeking solutions to the problems of capitalism and racism. Its underlying premise is Marxism-Leninism, but it takes into account the special aspects of national oppression and class exploitation as the inseparably linked elements of South African capitalism. Racism is the mechanism for the abstraction of super-profits from the labour of black workers. The "colonialism of a special type" which lies at the heart of the theory defines the essential character of the South African social formation. It determines the Party's immediate goal — the national liberation of the most oppressed section of society, the African people — as a condition for the attainment of its strategic objective — the creation of a socialist South Africa.

The Vanguard and socialist consciousness

How does the consciousness of the necessity for a socialist revolution arise?

The answer to this question was a source of fundamental disagreements among Russian militants during Lenin's time. Its proper solution is of cardinal importance in defining the role of a vanguard party. It was at the heart of Lenin's struggle against economism and opportunism of the left and right variety.

For the economists socialist ideology grows spontaneously out of the daily struggle of the workers against the employers. It accumulates gradually, by instalments, within the consciousness of the workers. The only organisation necessary for this is the trade union movement.

Lenin's standpoint by contrast is that

"Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is, only outside of the economic struggle, outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers."¹⁶

The reason for this is that socialism is a scientific body of ideas. As such it has to be studied as a science. And a science cannot arise spontaneously in the consciousness of people. They have to be taught it. The principles of

socialist ideology have to be introduced' quite deliberately by those who have mastered it, both "the conscious elements" within the working-class movement and the revolutionary intelligentsia. It is well worth quoting the passage by Karl Kautsky that Lenin himself used to disprove the spontaneity theory, because it isolates the main points of Lenin's thesis.

"Many of our revisionist critics believe that Marx asserted that economic development and the class struggle create not only the conditions for socialist production, but also, and directly, the *consciousness* (K.K.'s italics) of its necessity.. But this is absolutely untrue. Of course, socialism has its roots in modern economic relationships, just as the class struggle of the proletarians has... But socialism and the class struggle arise side by side, and not one out of the other. Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge..."

This knowledge, Kautsky went on to explain in the same passage, was first introduced into the working class movement by the "bourgeois intelligentsia" who took up revolutionary working-class positions (like Marx and Engels). In turn, those in the working class who assimilated this knowledge,

"introduced it into the proletarian class struggle where conditions allow that to be done. Thus socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without... and not something that arose within it spontaneously."¹⁷

This, however, must not lead us to the conclusion that socialist ideas are the property of an elite. Far from it. The working class will increasingly produce from its ranks socialist theoreticians and fighters when such ideas are implanted in its ranks in the course of struggle by committed socialist revolutionaries, who themselves are the class conscious elements within the workers, or members of the intelligentsia committed to the cause of socialism. Left to itself the working class

"is able to develop only trade union consciousness i.e. the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc."¹⁸

The spontaneous struggle of the masses against oppression and exploitation cannot by itself generate revolutionary consciousness, and there is every likelihood that spontaneity will fall prey to the ideas of the ruling capitalist class. This is because the dominant ideology in any society is the ideology of the ruling class, and in capitalist society this means bourgeois ideology. The capitalist class controls a vast apparatus for the dissemination of its ideas — the mass media and institutions of learning like schools and universities.

The propagation of socialist ideas, the struggle for a socialist society, is the supreme and special task of the vanguard party. Its duty is to unite the working class movement with socialism.

"Social-Democracy¹⁹ is the combination of the working class movement and socialism. Its task is not to serve the working class movement passively at each of its separate stages, but to represent the interests of the movement as a whole, to point out to this movement its ultimate aim and its political tasks, and to safeguard its political and ideological independence. Isolated from Social-Democracy, the working class movement becomes petty and inevitably becomes bourgeois. In waging only the economic struggle, the working-class loses its political independence, and betrays the great principle: 'the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves'."²⁰

The vanguard — its character and composition

The ideas advanced by Lenin in relation to the question of socialist consciousness have the most direct bearing on the composition and character of a vanguard party. In the Programme, documents and statements of the South African Communist Party and communist parties internationally the Leninist conception prevails.

The vanguard party is the material embodiment of socialist theory. The Party is not the entire working class, but a part of it, its vanguard.

"The party is the politically conscious, advanced section of the class, it is its vanguard. The strength of that vanguard is ten times, a hundred times, more than a hundred times greater than its members."²¹

How is it possible for the strength of hundreds to be greater than that of thousands?

"It can be, and is, *when the hundreds are organised*. Organisation increases strength tenfold."²²

Such a party is never a sectarian organisation. It does not set itself above other movements of the oppressed. As part of the oppressed and exploited it strives for unity within the ranks of the revolutionary forces. The condition of the entire toiling mass of people, not only that of the working class, is its concern. Everywhere and at all times it represents the interests of the whole movement for revolutionary change. A true communist is one

"who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event,

however small,... in order to clarify for everyone the world historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat."²³

The independence and separate identity of the vanguard party is the condition of its unity of will, and "this united will of an advanced thousand, hundred thousand, million *becomes* the will of the class."²⁴

The party then is the highest form of political organisation of the working-class. It is its political leader without whose guiding theory and activities it will be impossible to build a socialist society.

In *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* Lenin also enunciated the standards for and guidelines of Party activities and life. The main features are:

- strict observance of Party rules;
- a common code of discipline applicable to all members regardless of their status and role without exception,
- consistent adherence to the principles of democratic centralism and inner-Party democracy;
- development of the independent activity of the Party membership;
- collective leadership which minimises the risks of incorrect decision;
- criticism and self-criticism;
- utmost adherence to the principles of proletarian internationalism.

Many of these features which go to make up the character of a vanguard party have penetrated the ranks of most genuine liberation movements seeking revolutionary solutions to the problems of the people. And this is a measure of the force of the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism.

The Trade Union movement and the Party

Economism, both modern and old, often hides its anti-working class positions in Marxist garb. Opportunists in Lenin's days were fond of quoting Marx's famous observation that "every class struggle is a political struggle".²⁵ They did so precisely because they did not want to organise the political struggle of the workers. The economic struggle of the workers was the class struggle, they said, and since the workers conducted this struggle through their trade union organisations, there was no need to form a class political party of the workers.

In the South African context Marx's dictum is strikingly true. In every struggle — from that to form independent trade unions to the fight to achieve better working conditions and higher wages — the organisations of the capitalist class, especially the state, come out in support of the

employing class. This intervention is highly organised and takes the form of administrative and legal means, and more often than not resorts to force to suppress the workers' movement. There is therefore a visibly direct link between the organisation of production (economics) and the organisation of force (politics). There are however important limitations to this approach which have to be clearly understood if we are to avoid falling into the Economist trap.

The trade union struggle is rooted in the specific grievances which arise in the immediate conditions of the relationship between the workers and employers. Each struggle is organised around immediate demands. There is a constant ebb and flow in this struggle. The political struggle is an uninterrupted process organised around the totality of grievances and injustices prevalent in the society — political, economic, educational, social, cultural and every other issue which affects the life of society. It culminates only with the capture of state political power by the oppressed.

It is true that such a struggle is a form of the class struggle. But it is "only a weak embryo of it".²⁶ It becomes a class struggle truly

"when all the foremost representatives of the entire working-class are conscious of themselves as a single working class and launch a struggle that is directed, not against individual employers, but against the *entire class* of capitalists and against the government that supports that class... It is the task of Social-Democrats, by organising the workers, by conducting propaganda and agitation among them, to turn their spontaneous struggle against their oppressors into the struggle of the whole class, into the struggle of a definite political party for definite political and socialist ideals."²⁷

It would be a mistake to believe that Marx, Engels or Lenin invented the class struggle. It has always existed since the splitting of society into antagonistic classes. "To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it"²⁸ A Marxist, a vanguard fighter is one who "*extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. ... This is the touchstone on which the real understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested."²⁹ And this means the working class constituted into the ruling class.

Modern-day Economists, the Trotskyists, always confuse the working class movement with the organisation of revolutionaries. They are always counterposing the one against the other. "For socialists", Lenin said,

"the economic struggle serves as a basis for the organisation of the workers into a revolutionary party, for the strengthening and development of their class

struggle against the whole capitalist system. If the economic struggle is taken as something complete in itself, there will be nothing socialist in it."³⁰

The role of the proletarian vanguard is to utilise the sparks of political consciousness generated by the workers' struggle to raise their political consciousness even higher. It lies not only in winning better terms for the sale of labour-power of the workers, but to organise the workers for the destruction of the social system which gives rise to the oppression and exploitation of the working class.

In this lies the real relationship between the trade union struggle and the political struggle.

The vanguard party and the national democratic revolution

A persistent criticism levelled at the SACP by the ultra-left is that it is revisionist: it has abandoned the socialist revolution in South Africa by its unconditional support for the national liberation struggle headed by the ANC. There is no need, they argue, to pursue the aims of the national democratic revolution. Socialism must be the immediate goal of the struggle in South Africa. What grounds do they advance for their position?

This is the gist of their argument: South Africa is a highly developed capitalist formation. Capitalist social relations are dominant. The black working class is the most numerous and strongest social force in the society and it has a long history of struggle. All the objective conditions therefore are ripe for a socialist revolution.

We can see in this approach a complete reliance on objective factors solely. The role of the subjective factor in a social revolution is completely ignored. Does the black working class, as a class, and not only its advanced section, perceive its goal as the socialist goal? Is it conscious, as a class, of the necessity for the socialist revolution immediately? What does the experience of the decades of struggle indicate? In the South African context is it really possible to completely separate the class struggle from the national struggle?

These and many related questions are left completely unanswered. The objective conditions of their life form the working class into a disciplined, organised class used to cooperation and collective activity. This is what the production process of capitalism imposes on the workers. These are attributes necessary for a revolutionary struggle. True. But does it follow from this that such a struggle is one *consciously* directed for the socialist goal? In his book, "No Middle Road", Joe Slovo deals at length with these issues, and there is no need here to restate those arguments. Wherein,

though does the revisionism lie? Has the Party broken with Marxist-Leninist tenets? Let us look at the way Lenin approached the relationship between the socialist and national democratic revolution.

"Can the class-conscious worker forget the democratic struggle for the sake of the socialist struggle, or forget the latter for the sake of the former?" Lenin asks. His reply is — clearly not! "... a class-conscious worker.... understands the relation between the two struggles. He knows that there is no road to socialism save the road through democracy,..."³¹

For Lenin therefore there exists a dialectical unity between socialism and democracy. In the days and months preceding the establishment of the democratic republic in Russia he argued strongly against all those who postulated the socialist solution as the immediate question of the Russian revolution.

"We are all convinced that the emancipation of the working classes must be won by the working classes themselves; a socialist revolution is out of the question unless the masses become class conscious and organised, trained and educated in an open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie."³²

His reply to those who argued that this was an abandonment of the socialist revolution was:

"... we are not putting it off, but are taking the first steps towards it in the only possible way, along the only correct path, namely, the path of a democratic republic. Whoever wants to reach socialism by any other path than that of political democracy, will inevitably arrive at conclusions that are absurd and reactionary..."³³

How and when will the socialist revolution be conducted in such a situation?

"From the democratic revolution we shall at once, and precisely in the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organised proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution."³⁴

Naturally, the South African situation does not correspond exactly with that which prevailed in Russia in those days. But in all of the above Lenin is dealing with factors which are material to any socialist revolution. Only when the entire mass of toilers, and not only the class conscious vanguard, are convinced and struggle for the socialist ideals is a social revolution possible. We must not view the two struggles (the national democratic and socialist) as absolutely compartmentalised. Revolution is an uninterrupted process, and the socialist revolution advances immediately from the democratic in a single continuum.

These are positions which the South African Communist Party advances. Far from revising Marxism the Party's position underscores it. And from this the conclusion is that it is the ultra-left who are the real revisionists, despite their revolutionary sounding phrases and position.

The correctness of Lenin's position is undoubted. In Russia the transition was, in historical terms, dramatically short. And this was due to the interplay of a complex set of unique factors. The important point however, is that there was a party (Bolshevik) which had a policy of "uninterrupted revolution", and was able to lead the masses to socialism when the consciousness of its necessity became revealed.

Conclusion

In Africa the need for vanguard parties is more clearly being recognised. On our very doorstep, the MPLA and FRELIMO have been functioning as vanguard parties. In a growing number of countries the revolutionary democratic movements have consciously opted for socialist orientation of society. They base their foundation on a number of key Marxist-Leninist propositions. In this sense they can be regarded as transitional vanguard parties. And this corresponds to the material and spiritual factors obtaining in the countries in which they have arisen.

These developments testify to the universal validity of Marxism-Leninism and the theory of the vanguard within it.

Lenin warns us about the dangers of ultra-Leftism which seeks to "make" the socialist revolution "today" without scientific consideration of key elements for its organisation. "The proletarian revolution", he warns, "is impossible without the sympathy and support of the overwhelming majority of the working people for their vanguard . . . But this sympathy and this support is not forthcoming immediately . . . They are won in the course of long, arduous and stern class struggle."³⁵

It is now 80 years since Lenin's teaching on the vanguard party first appeared in *What Is To Be Done?* For South African and all other revolutionaries on our continent it has a direct relevance to the unfolding revolution of our time.

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THE FIGHT FOR MARXISM-LENINISM IN THE WORLD COMMUNIST AND LIBERATION MOVEMENTS

**By Gus Hall,
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Before getting into the subject at hand I would like to make a few introductory remarks.

In the interest of clarity and documentation, I will quote different sources, especially statements of the leading bodies of the Italian Communist Party, issued December 30, 1981 and the Communist Party of Spain, issued January 9, 1982.

In addition, I would like to suggest the following guiding framework and perspective for our discussion.

Historic Perspective

In the great struggle for human progress no responsible, serious, revolutionary party — in the words of a popular American song — ever “promised you a rose garden.” Certainly not a political-ideological rose garden, without thorns and weeds. Especially in the struggle for the greatest qualitative social advance — to socialism and communism.

In every national rose garden there are always some plants you are sure will grow and produce beautiful red roses but which, instead of blooming, fade and die. That’s life and nature. But it is also politics.

All serious gardeners should keep in mind that thorns and weeds are bothersome. But they do not destroy rose gardens any more than the political and ideological weeds destroy, weaken or reverse the world revolutionary process.

In the international rose garden, today’s healthy, hardy, full-blooming, blue-ribbon roses are real socialism, Marxism-Leninism, the international working class and the movements for national liberation.

The world revolutionary process is irreversible and indestructible because there are inner laws of objective developments. And these immutable laws provide the incentive, mould the political forces, create the momentum, set the direction and steer the course by which human society advances to ever higher levels.

The transition to socialism continues this historic process and is propelled by the same objective laws and forces. Of course along the inevitable forward march there are momentary setbacks, obstacles, difficulties and frustrations. There are always some individuals who become disoriented; some lose sight of who the real enemy is; some even fall into step with, or march along parallel lines with the class enemy.

Nevertheless, the laws of objective social developments maintain perpetual, unrelenting pressures on all revolutionary forces to stay in step and work with the forward march of history. These laws tend to compel forces to deal with the realities of the class struggle.

Those who resist these pressures, giving in to counter-class pressures, move backwards, become isolated from the mainstream world revolutionary process.

In struggle, all forces suffer setbacks. But they are not all the same. For the defenders of capitalism the setbacks cannot be separated from the crises of the decline and decay of the system itself. In fact, the setbacks become a part of the crisis of capitalism. These are setbacks of a defective airplane, out of control, that will eventually go into a nosedive and crash.

Those of us who are fighters for socialism are on board the new, rising socio-economic plane, powered by working class forces, by the laws of objective developments, and guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism. For us, the difficulties, obstacles and the effects of setbacks are limited by the upward, forward momentum of the world revolutionary process. Each setback has within it the seeds of overcoming it.

It is from this perspective that I would now like to discuss statements issued by some leading cadres of a few Communist Parties.

Intent and Purpose

I want to state at this point that in no instance do we attribute the statements and positions contained in these documents to an entire Party, or to the membership of any Party.

In no way should these remarks be interpreted as an attack on any Party, its membership or on any individual within a Party. This is a discussion of the political content of these documents.

In fact, the essence of the criticisms we make is in keeping with rising, similar trends within the Parties themselves.

For example, in a statement published in the January 6, 1982, *L'Unita*, Armando Cassuta, a leading member of the Italian Communist Party said concerning his Party's statement "it represents not merely a turning point but a complete break with our tradition, our history and with the theses of our Party Congress."

And in the Spanish statement we find a revealing admission that anti-Communism "scandalizes and disturbs quite a few Communists and workers who, as a result of class instinct, find themselves tempted to adopt a justifying or defensive attitude." In other words, Spanish Communists and workers will instinctively be tempted to defend real socialism!

It is important to note and keep in mind the fact that out of some 120 Communist and Workers' Parties throughout the world, the distortions and disorienting errors of which I will speak appear in but a handful.

In order to dispel any ambiguity, our points of reference include the following:

We believe the world revolutionary process is alive and fighting.

We believe Marxism-Leninism is the most dynamic, potent, flourishing body of thought in the world.

Based on continuing study and eye-witness observations, we believe real socialism is healthy, vigorous, and is continually breaking new ground, and is the only part of the world that is breaking through the barriers of the past.

We believe the socialist world is the only part of the world that is successfully building a socio-economic system which for the first time in human history places human concerns, human welfare and well-being, and human rights as the very core, the essence and foundation stone of its existence.

Unfortunately, there are some Communists who have adopted wrong positions in relation to these points of reference. These wrong positions are a serious challenge to the proven basic tenets of the science of Marxism-Leninism and scientific socialism.

We must deal with these wrong positions because they are negative elements, obstacles to our struggles against U.S. monopoly capital, against the positions and policies of U.S. aggression, against U.S. imperialism, and our struggles for peace, detente and socialism.

The Big Lie

We must deal with these errors because their premises and assertions are based on the fabrications and vile slander of the Big Lie. These distortions and misrepresentations tend to give credence to the Big Lie about real, existing socialism.

It is very much to the point that NATO Secretary General Joseph Luns, a reactionary, imperialist, cold-warmlonger, praised Comrade Berlinguer's crude attacks as a shining example of how the capitalist governments should respond to the crisis in Poland.

And it is most fitting that Franz Josef Strauss, the hero of the Federal Republic of Germany (F.R.G.) ultra-right wing and neo-Nazi revanchists, charged that F.R.G. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt "should have responded at least as strongly as France and Britain or the *Spanish and Italian Communists.*" (Italics added.)

It was August Babel, the early German Marxist, who said that if the enemies of the working class praise you, you must stop to consider what stupid blunder you could have made.

Poland — Pretext for Anti-Socialist Campaign

The events in Poland were not the cause, or even the catalyst, for the impermissible, irresponsible and slanderous statements by some leading circles of the Communist Parties of Italy, Spain and also Japan. The events in Poland were the pretext, the excuse, to go public with their anti-Soviet, anti-working class, anti-Marxist-Leninist diatribes.

These distortions and fabrications have been festering in their petty bourgeois, opportunist-revisionist think-tanks for many years. The recent statements are but a logical conclusion and further proof that opportunism grows according to its own inner laws.

There is a logical sequence of developments which, if not checked and reversed, will go from small acts of ingratiating accommodation to the enemy to complete capitulation, collaboration, and betrayal of working class interests. And there is an opportunistic point of no return in the process.

Disagreements vs. Wrong Positions

It is to be expected and is completely acceptable that differences arise between Communist Parties of different countries. There are divergent views on tactics, on emphasis, on assessments, especially when they reflect national peculiarities. Such differences have always been the subject of on-going discussions and even heated debates in the world Communist movement. Such disagreements and differences are almost inevitable. And such dialogues can be most healthy and beneficial. Such debates and discussions are effective methods of coming to collective conclusions and drawing productive lessons.

Such disagreements, however, are not what we are discussing today. There is a distinct dividing line, an opposition between such differences and wrong positions that have literally jumped off the political and ideological cliff.

It is one thing to criticize weaknesses and mistakes with a partisan desire to help to correct them. It is quite another to join the frenzied, howling hyenas of reaction and imperialism in condemning, denouncing and vilifying socialism and Marxism-Leninism while prettifying and running interference for imperialism.

Socialism vs. Anti-Socialism

It is an axiom of the class struggle that you cannot run with the hares and hunt with the hounds at the same time. In the real world, you cannot be in the orbit of imperialism, running with anti-Soviet, anti-socialist forces, while also running with the forces of the working class, socialism and national liberation. In the real world you cannot be in the same orbit with Communists and other revolutionary forces while giving open support at every turn of events to the forces of reaction and counter-revolution.

Demagogy and militant-sounding rhetoric cannot cover up the fact that in Poland there was a counter-revolution in process. Objectively, one either supports or opposes the forces of imperialism and counter-revolution.

One can try to bridge the gap of running in two different ideological worlds only by ignoring and rejecting the undeniable truth that in Poland the forces of counter-revolution had gained the upper hand in the leadership of the Solidarity movement. These forces had succeeded in creating economic chaos and social disorder and were moving quickly towards confrontation and civil war against socialism

One can try to bridge the gap only by ignoring the roles of U.S. imperialism, the U.S. banks, NATO, the CIA and their subversive radio networks in Poland, by dismissing such facts as the network of counter-revolutionary centres that were set up by the CIA in the Federal Republic of Germany, Vienna, Stockholm and Geneva.

Or, the fact that in just one case a million dollars worth of arms, fragmentation bombs, delayed action mines and other slick weapon devices for terror and sabotage were shipped from Cleveland, Ohio to Poland by way of Austria, labelled "Food Shipments."

Or, if you dismiss the fact that the counter-revolutionaries had a long hit list of Polish Communists whom they had marked for execution once the socialist power was overthrown. The traitorous conspiracy to execute Polish Communist leaders is defended in the name of "establishing true democracy in Poland" and "ensuring Polish renewal."

One cannot be for socialism in the abstract, and be anti-socialist in the concrete wherever it is a living reality. One can do this only by accepting the false premises of the Hitlerian Big Lie about real socialism. That has been the nature and the role of Trotskyite sects during their 60 years of service to imperialism. Elaborate pronouncements advocating and praising socialism in the abstract, while condemning and vilifying it wherever it exists, are a coverup for anti-socialism.

Poland: Setting the Record Straight

Although the crisis developments in Poland are but the pretext for these anti-Polish, anti-socialist positions, nevertheless let me set the record straight on Poland by briefly reviewing the basic truth about what happened in Poland.

With the best of intentions and a strong desire to build a modern, industrial nation, the leadership of the Party and government in Poland made a number of serious mistakes, compounded over a number of years.

The most serious and costly of these mistakes were direct violations of the principles and tenets of a planned, balanced, socialist economic structure

When subjective factors take over, override and dominate the estimate of objective reality, of what is socially and economically realistic, imbalances will necessarily follow. As the result of such an unrealistic approach, and in violation of principles of socialist planning, the Polish leadership permitted wages and prices, production and trade, available capital and loans and foreign debts to get out of balance.

An imbalance arose between the rapidly expanding aspirations and expectations of the workers and people and the ability of society's productive capacity to satisfy them. An imbalance developed between plans and economic decisions and the ability of the economy to implement them.

An imbalance arose between forced acceleration of economic growth and sweeping modernization of industry and the resources, funds and capabilities of the existing economic, scientific and technological base to absorb them.

Again, with the best of intentions Poland veered sharply off the path that gives socialism its advantage over capitalism — a planned, stable, growing economic base. And in this process the Polish leadership did not explain or try to convince the people what was required for the building of such an industrial base. Instead, they took bureaucratic short cuts, which also led to some corruption. The imbalances then gave rise to serious economic distortions and problems which, in turn, gave rise to the Solidarity movement.

But right from the beginning, Solidarity's leaders presented demands without any consideration for the consequences to the economy. The wage concessions, for instance, were completely out of line with the level of production and the prices of goods. To pay for these concessions the economy was forced into deeper and deeper debt. Relentlessly and continually the Solidarity leadership escalated their demands on the economy, while calling for slowdowns and stoppages that would further reduce the resources to meet their demands.

And, finally, the banks — especially the U.S. banks — seized the opportunity and demanded huge payments. This action was motivated solely by political designs to further destabilize the Polish economy.

Polish Trap was Set

The net result was economic chaos and social disorder. Because of the endless strikes, slowdowns and destructive sabotage, production took a steep plunge, sending the whole economy into a tailspin.

Thus, the root of the crisis was not the socialist system, but gross violation of the laws of development and planning which are the cornerstone of a socialist system.

The economic crisis and the chaotic atmosphere were precisely what the internal anti-socialist elements, the CIA and other imperialist forces had been working and waiting for. They had their claws out. And when the conditions were ripe, they pounced.

The economic crisis then turned into a political crisis. There was confusion, disorientation, disorder and a lack of leadership.

The Polish trap was set. The anti-socialist, counter-revolutionary forces became more brazen and emboldened by the day. They moved rapidly towards confrontation, insurrection and political takeover.

Any objective observer, and certainly any partisan of socialism, could see that martial law was a necessary emergency step in order to prevent the anti-socialist, counter-revolutionary forces from taking power.

Real Stakes, Limited Options

The declaration and institution of martial law in Poland was an act of self-defence and self-preservation as a socialist country. It defended, preserved and secured socialism in Poland. The fact that many Polish people, including workers, were misled does not in any way change what the real stakes were at that moment.

Therefore, as was the case for the leaders of the Polish Communist Party and government, the options for all forces, including Communist leaders throughout the world, were severely limited. One had to take a position. Maybe it was easier for us, because we know that contrary to the allegations of the Big Lie, the export of counter-revolution is the centrepiece of the Reagan-Haig foreign policy. It has been assigned the status of state policy by the Reagan Administration.

This was their purpose and plan in Poland. It is their plan for the Caribbean, for the Middle East, for every region of the world.

The Grand Design

In the counter-revolutionary plans of imperialism, the destruction of socialism in Poland was but the first step in a grand design. This should not surprise anyone. In the words of President Reagan, Poland was to be "the beginning of the end."

The larger plan was to use the crisis in Poland to create a flashpoint in Europe, to destroy the balance that has existed since the Second World

War, a balance in which the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries are the main anti-imperialist, anti-war forces.

The plan was to use the change in the balance of forces in Europe to shift the balance of forces in favour of imperialism on a world scale. The plan was to annul, to void, the agreements reached at Yalta and Potsdam, agreements which established today's boundaries. These agreements included acceptance by U.S., British and French imperialism that the East European countries would rebuild their post-war societies on a socialist basis.

The Reagan Administration saw the events in Poland as the pretext, the perfect opportunity and the key link in returning to the cold war policies of John Foster Dulles and the "American Century." They saw the events in Poland as the cover to re-establish U.S. imperialism as the unchallenged military and economic power in Europe, to roll back the borders of socialism and to turn back the clock of history on the movements of national liberation and anti-colonialism.

Now they are frustrated and furious because the Polish key got jammed and wouldn't turn.

The Central Question

It is possible to ignore many secondary questions on anything. But in all honesty no one can evade the hard central question: support or non-support to the anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary forces. The lines were clearly drawn.

In this regard, one must note that the leading Communist cadres in Poland tried for a year or more, most patiently, maybe even too patiently, to resist and fight against the forces of counter-revolution by peaceful means. But to no avail. No amount of concessions was enough because many of Solidarity's leaders were aiming not for reform but for counter-revolution. Martial law became inevitable and necessary.

Hence, it is incomprehensible how some leaders of the Italian and Spanish Communist Parties can describe the actions of the socialist, working class power in Poland against counter revolution as "a military putsch," "a military takeover," "a military coup d'etat," and "a military dictatorship." Intended or not, objectively such invectives turn into support and encouragement to the forces of counter-revolution.

Class Content, Martial Law

Any honest person with the very minimum of class instinct understands the class content — the purpose and intent — of martial law when it is used to preserve and secure a socialist, working class society, and the opposite purpose and intent when it is used in the capitalist world to preserve and sustain the system of monopoly capital, class exploitation, racism and oppression.

Martial law in Poland is not replacing the socialist system. It is a temporary, emergency measure taken to preserve the socialist economic base and the democratic superstructure, including the Sejm (Polish Parliament), the trade unions and the many diverse mass organizations of the people of Poland.

In his recent address to the Central Committee, First Secretary Wojciech Jaruzelski warned, "the hopes for reversing the development in Poland are a dangerous illusion, a dangerous mistake."

To those who continue their subversive traitorous, counter-revolutionary activities under the slogan, "the winter is yours, the spring will be ours," General Jaruzelski rejoined: "the spring will be neither 'ours' nor 'yours'. It will be Polish and it will be socialist."

Socialism Secured

All the developments since martial law was established are clear, incontrovertible proof that the measure was necessary and correct. The Polish economy is beginning to normalize, production is up, order has been restored, the basic needs and rights of the people have been preserved and the socialist superstructure is secured. The trade unions will have more precise but greater decision-making roles and greater power in general in a renewed Poland.

It is clearly evident that the Polish Communist Party and government are drawing the necessary conclusions and lessons. They are in the process of making the appropriate changes, adjustments and corrections

Poland will return to completely normal life, to the normal path of building socialism based on public ownership of industries, banks, land and natural resources, to a worker-owned, controlled and run nation. As a result, socialism in Poland will continue on the road to building a modern industrial nation, with ever-higher standards of living and well-being and a richer quality of life.

Big Lie — Meeting of Like Minds

The recent statements by some of the leading cadres of the Italian and Spanish Communist Parties explicitly and implicitly contain just about every fabrication, mystification, distortion and vile slander that the reactionary forces have been spreading against socialism, and especially the Soviet Union, for over 60 years.

For example, amazing as it may seem to some, there is no basic difference between the statements by U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig — "the Soviet Union shows clear signs of historic decline" — and Zbigniew Brzezinski — "the socialist system has become antiquated" — and the Italian Party statement — "the phase of development ushered in by the October Revolution has lost its momentum."

The vile slander that the October Revolution has "lost its momentum" and that the Soviet Union is in "historic decline" is nothing but a meeting of like anti-Soviet minds.

What is the difference in intent between Alexander Haig's contention that "the economies of Moscow's East European allies are in various stages of decline" and the Italian leaders' position that "(the system) holds in check the economic, technological and cultural dynamics of these socialist countries"?

There is no difference between Comrade Berlinguer's "it is necessary to go beyond the criticism of individual mistakes and look for the errors in the system" and Haig's, "the Communist system itself is in trouble."

There is a striking similarity between the Italian Communist Party's Political Bureau statement that "the socialist-oriented countries are now faced with retrogressive processes" and Reagan's statement that "communism is an aberration" and Brzezinski's "the socialist bloc is starting to disintegrate."

Is this not a meeting of similar minds?

And certainly there is no disagreement between the many statements by Reagan, Kissinger, Weinberger and Haig and the Italian Party's statement that real socialism "has a system which permits no real democratic participation, neither in production nor in the political field. All democratic discussion within the Parties has been eliminated "

Add to these the corresponding Spanish Party statement that "the Soviet political model . . . created the phenomenon that all democratic discussion within the Party had been eliminated" and you can clearly see that these leading Communists have fallen into the swamp with the most reactionary, rabid anti-Soviet and anti-socialist slander campaign ever launched.

The Big Lie about Poland

To prove this charge let me quote from the attacks on the Soviet Union and socialism contained in the Italian Communist Party's statement. The following is the position of the Italian leadership on the Polish crisis, using it as a pretext for a vicious attack on the Soviet Union and on socialism.

In Poland, the Soviet pressure to maintain the same model at all costs . . . played an important role in implanting the military junta . . .

The crisis . . . in Poland . . . cannot be attributed to the manoeuvres of reactionary forces hostile to socialism . . .

The crisis . . . cannot be explained without putting in the centre of any critical analysis the political regime in Poland

In other words, it is socialism, not anti-socialism, that is to blame for the Polish crisis!

And further:

The negative influence exercised by the USSR and other countries of the Warsaw Pact in the crisis was great. Heavy pressure was imposed, impermissible interference.

Reagan and Haig have used identical words.

These malicious attacks are based on the Big Lie, including the lies about a non-existing "Soviet menace," a "Soviet threat" and "the export of revolution."

There is no difference between the falsifications in the Italian and Spanish Parties' statements and the Big Lie that the Soviet Union is in the business of "exporting revolution," of "imposing its single Soviet model" on other countries.

Are we not at this very moment faced with the same slander in relation to the struggles for national liberation in El Salvador and Nicaragua and the mounting threats against Cuba coming from U.S. imperialism?

The Big Lie in the Caribbean

Just last week in President Reagan's Caribbean Basin policy speech, these very same Big Lies were used to camouflage U.S. imperialist designs in the Caribbean Big Lie:

A new kind of colonialism stalks the world today and threatens our independence . . .

We will face . . . more regimes exporting subversion . . .

The Soviet Union and Cuba are trying to impose Communist dictatorship there.

Based on the Big Lie applied to the Caribbean, Reagan put forth the imperialist bottom line; "we will do whatever is prudent and necessary to prevent new Cubas."

The slander that the "Soviet Union is imposing its single Soviet model" on other countries becomes a cover for imperialist aggression

Big Lie Master Plan

As we all know, the Big Lie of anti-communism is not just an ordinary lie. It is a carefully constructed brainwashing master plan. It is a master plan that includes every possible fabrication, every myth, forgery, distortion and slander dreamed up by Big Lie think tanks for many years.

Goebbels, Mussolini, Hoover, Kissinger, Brzezinski and dozens more full-time masters of deceit — ideologues on the payroll of reactionary and fascist governments — all had a hand in weaving this most massive fraud in human history. It was constructed on the Hitlerian concept that if a lie is big enough and is repeated often enough some people will believe some of it.

The Big Lie was designed as a weapon against socialism because capitalism, in crisis, decay and decline, cannot be defended any other way.

We should never forget that 50 million people, 20 million of whom were Soviet and 6 million Jews from many lands, were victims of the Big Lie. The Big Lie is today's subterfuge for all the nuclear maniacs. It is the last hiding place for all of the world's imperialist scoundrels. The end result of the Big Lie can be the end of human life on our precious planet.

Big Lie Supports Monopoly Capital

In today's world it is an absolute truth that anyone using the Big Lie, in whole or in part, consciously or unconsciously, with whatever intent, objectively gives support to monopoly capital and everything it stands for — class exploitation, racism, wars of aggression, poverty and corruption.

Any appeasement whatsoever to the Big Lie, no matter how small, makes one vulnerable to ideological contamination. This is undeniable because the Big Lie strikes at the main forces opposing imperialism and monopoly capital. Advocates of the Big Lie objectively become part of the forces opposing peace, progress, democracy and socialism.

What is Socialist Democracy?

In the remarks by Comrades Berlinguer and Carillo, the word "democracy" is abused in both letter and spirit. The word is inserted every couple of lines, as if it is being used for purposes of decoration and embellishment. It is used to give the false impression that democracy does not exist in the socialist countries, and to show that Marxism-Leninism is

in fact a theoretical obstacle to the development of democracy in a socialist society. Of course the truth is the very opposite. The social essence of Marxism-Leninism is to free humanity from all forms of oppression. It is the guiding science in the struggle for real democracy.

Any honest, objective observer would quickly recognize the truth about the nature of socialist democracy. It is a live, dynamic, advanced and ever growing representative system reflecting the progress in the building of real socialism. Right from the word "go," socialism has been more democratic than anything capitalism ever had to offer.

Socialist democracy is a continually developing process. It consciously and consistently moves in the direction of involving greater and greater numbers of people in all management and decision-making processes. It is real people's power.

In the Soviet Union, one out of every four citizens over 18 years of age is involved in decision-making governing bodies.

A visit to any Soviet factory will convince even an honest sceptic that Soviet workers are truly in charge. On the other hand, a visit to any U.S. industrial plant will show that American workers are without power or influence and have absolutely no real decision-making role in the production process.

Under the very best circumstances, bourgeois democracy is 80 per cent frills and illusory embellishments, with very little substance in real people's political or economic power.

Socialist democracy has discarded much of the meaningless trappings and replaced them with organs of real people's power with the right and the responsibility to govern and make decisions in every area of life.

Socialism is a new concept, a new ideal. Each step forward breaks new ground. Communists are pioneering trail blazers, discovering a brand new world. And precisely because socialism is always breaking new ground, of necessity there is always present an element of trial and error, of trying and testing. Of course there are mistakes and weaknesses. It could not be otherwise in the real world.

Who Needs the Fig Leaves?

In the context of objective truth and the real world of socialism, the partisans of socialism defend it and explain the weaknesses and mistakes within the framework of the overall forward thrust. Most are errors related to growth. The Eurocommunists, on the other hand, take the weaknesses out of the overall context and misinterpret and misuse them to discredit,

downgrade and demean the whole socialist system, while praising bourgeois trappings that appear democratic.

Socialist democracy does not need fig leaves because it has nothing to hide. For bourgeois democracy, fig leaves and democratic trappings are a necessity because it must try to hide from the working class and people the truth — that Big Business rules and runs the economy and politics in the interests of private corporations and maximum profits. A classic example of the much-touted “pluralism” is our two-headed party of Big Business, the Democrats and Republicans.

Big Lie Variations

As I said earlier, the pretext for the Italian and Spanish statements was Poland. But the main target of the attack is what they call “the Soviet model that has not only exported, but forcefully imposed it on the other socialist-oriented countries.”

Based on these reprehensible attacks, one is led to draw the conclusion that the victories of socialism in the Eastern European countries after World War II were actually a defeat for world socialism, and further, that these socialist victories are today the main obstacles to the future development of socialism, especially in Europe.

Here we should take special note of the fact that nowhere in the statement are these countries referred to as socialist countries, but instead they become “socialist oriented,” countries of “a socialist type,” or “Eastern European countries.”

Again, we are being deviously led to the conclusion that real socialism does not exist anywhere in the world today.

Another logical conclusion could be that the Yalta and Potsdam agreements, which recognized the new socialist governments, were a mistake and a setback for socialism.

Here is how the Spanish slander goes:

The future of our cause . . . depends on our ability . . . to explain the degenerative movements existing in countries of real socialism, their causes and their consequences, and to establish a difference between ourselves and those models or practices that begin to drift further and further away from our basic conception of revolutionary Marxism.

And the Italian slander takes off from the same premise:

The “model” applied in the Soviet Union and passed on to the countries of Eastern Europe is unrepeatable. Any split between socialism and democracy, between social property and social control of the means of production and forms of a democratic organization of political power is unacceptable.

These statements stand alone as proof that many of the attacks are against non-existing phenomena. They are battling windmills that exist only in the opportunistic minds of their inventors. They are variations of the Big Lie. For example, the concept of a "model" for the building of socialism exists only in the opportunistic eyes of the Eurocommunist beholders.

Role of Socialist Trade Unions

When Comrade Carillo argues that "the demands for independent labour unions and freedom of expression are needs we consider basic to socialist regimes," he is intentionally trying to mislead. The obvious inference is that the countries of real socialism do not meet these basic needs. On the contrary, it is precisely these needs that socialism has fulfilled and continues to fulfill.

Independent trade unions? Yes. But not unions with ulterior counter-revolutionary motives, irresponsible unions destructive of the workers' interests in building a better life.

In a capitalist society the class interests of the workers and the bosses are in sharp contradiction. Therefore, whatever differences arise between say the managers and workers must be resolved in the daily class struggle.

In a socialist society, the management of industrial plants and enterprises, the personnel of governing bodies, the members and leaders of the Communist Party and the members and leaders of trade unions are all part of one class, the working class. They are all one class, with the same, common class interests. The role of trade unions, therefore, is very different in a socialist society. And they should be. The differences that arise between managers and workers in a socialist factory can be resolved within the socialist system itself.

False Impressions about the Party and World Movement

Another effort to mislead and distort is the statement that "the Communist Party of Spain is no longer conceived as an 'army' or as 'a military staff'." Again, it is geared to give the false impression that other Communist Parties, especially in the socialist countries, do consider themselves "military staffs" or an "army."

Comrade Berlinguer's statement that the Italian Communist Party "regards as outmoded the idea of a homogeneous world Communist movement" is meant to leave the false impression that other Communist Parties, especially in the socialist countries, are advocates of "a homogeneous Communist movement."

"Plague on Both Houses"

The depth of opportunistic retrogression is clearly evident in Comrade Berlinguer's defence of NATO.

Of course, he covers up by saying he does not want to change the balance of power between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. But his real concern comes through when he says, "a change in favour of the Warsaw Pact would mean the extension of the Soviet model of economic planning and organization" — meaning, of course, the "extension" of socialism!

Comrade Berlinguer wants the working class movement of Europe to put off, to postpone, the struggle for socialism because it would upset NATO.

Camouflaging support for NATO and claiming to be for peace and disarmament, many of the Italian Communist leaders adopt a "plague on both your houses" so-called neutral stance in relation to the "socialist camp" and the "imperialist camp."

Any neutrality between classes in struggle objectively turns into support for the reactionary class holding back social progress.

Denouncing the division of Europe into two equally guilty opposing blocs, these Communist leaders call for the dissolution of NATO *and* the Warsaw Pact countries, under the assumption that once they are dissolved every country will then "develop independent initiatives aimed at re-establishing the East-West dialogue and promote negotiations leading to arms reduction in a balanced manner and on the basis of mutual security."

Aside from the fact that this position appears to be either the height of naivete or hypocrisy, the statement concentrates only on denouncing the Warsaw Treaty nations, the "Soviet bloc," the "Soviet SS-20s," and ending, "Soviet interference, military intervention and pressure on non-aligned countries." Objectively, this position is nothing short of aiding and abetting the imperialist designs of the NATO alliance.

Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact Nations Preserve Peace

In reality, it is precisely the Warsaw Pact nations who are maintaining the strategic military balance of forces that holds at bay the aggressive designs of world imperialism to dominate the world, to destroy world socialism and to move toward nuclear confrontation and world annihilation. It is the Warsaw Pact alliance that preserves the endangered peace of the world.

And the statements ignore that it is precisely the Warsaw Pact nations who made numerous repeated proposals to dissolve both military alliances and to move toward mutual and total disarmament. And they also ignore

that the U.S. and NATO have repeatedly rejected such proposals out of hand, without any discussion whatsoever.

The truth is that U.S. imperialism is straining at the leash held tight in the hands of the socialist community of states, and first and foremostly by the steadfast peace policies and actions of the Soviet Union. This is the leash that restrains U.S. imperialism from running rampant throughout the world.

Nowhere in the positions of the Italian and Spanish Parties is mention made of the some 100 proposals made by the Soviet Union and Comrade Leonid Brezhnev initiatives for arms negotiations and reductions, for detente, peace and coexistence.

Just this past week, hidden in the back pages of *The New York Times*, you will find Comrade Brezhnev's latest proposal to freeze testing and production of all nuclear weapons.

But much mention is made of non-existent initiatives taken by "democratic forces and Western European governments . . . by the Social Democratic-Liberal government of the Federal Republic of Germany." This is open, blatant anti-Sovietism and prettifying of imperialism.

Society of Revisionists and Opportunists

The ideologues of U.S. imperialism have established minimum standards for membership in the "Society of Revisionists and Opportunists."

These standards have been carefully formulated by Zbigniew Brzezinski.

The leading Communists espousing the revisionist-opportunist slander contained in the documents under discussion would definitely qualify for membership.

Let us take a look at the criteria set up by Brzezinski & Co:

1. "Disassociation from the Soviet Union and its dictates";
2. "Promotion of democracy and socialism with a human face",
3. "Ending democratic centralism in the Communist Parties";
4. "Advancing policies which correspond to the national traditions of individual countries and mute the class struggle";
5. "Cease criticism of U.S. foreign policy";
6. "Set the Communist Parties in the European capitalist countries against those in the socialist countries";
7. "Discredit existing socialism in the countries in which a socialist society has already been built, particularly the Soviet Union."

(P.N. Fedoseyev et al., *What is "Democratic Socialism?"*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1980, p.69)

Cover for Rejection of Real Socialism

The charge of a so-called "Soviet model of socialism imposed on others" by the Spanish and Italian Parties is a cover for the rejection of real socialism, in the Soviet Union and wherever it exists.

In the world Communist movement the Eurocommunist leaders stand alone in accusing the Soviet Union of "maintaining the Soviet political model at all costs." They continually charge that the Soviet Union has devised such "a model of socialism in the Soviet Union that denies real socialist democracy." They assert that the Soviet Union is an "institutionalized bureaucracy." They charge that the Soviet Union is determined to "export," "impose," and "maintain this model" in other countries by "brutal means," under the domination of the Soviet "Leader Party."

I am sure the Italian and Spanish comrades know full well there is no "model" in the real world of socialism, that there never was and, what is most important, no one ever insisted there was.

Laws of Socialist Construction

However, Communists throughout the world will insist that there is a wealth of invaluable, inexhaustible socialist thought and experience accumulated in the 64 years of building socialism. There are innumerable lessons, conclusions and guiding principles derived that have universal features as well as national peculiarities. How could it be otherwise?

Denial and rejection of this reality is a denial and rejection of scientific socialism guided by Marxism-Leninism.

Among the universally applicable experiences which have become the laws of socialist construction are the following:

1) Socialism can become a reality only as a result of waging the class struggle in all areas of life, including the ideological arena;

2) The socialist revolution can become a reality only if the capitalist class is removed and barred from economic power, which means taking over the means of production. Also, the enemy must be removed from positions of power in the political and ideological arena;

3) Socialism can become a reality only by the organization of state power in which the working class, in alliance with the petty bourgeoisie, farmers, intellectuals and professionals, hold the dominant position of power in the country.

4) Socialism can become a reality only if the leading force, the working class, is led by its revolutionary, vanguard Communist Party, guided by

and equipped with the creative application of the science of Marxism-Leninism;

5) Socialism can grow and flourish only if it pursues an international policy of anti-imperialism and anti-racism, and if it takes its place in the front ranks of the forces that propel the world revolutionary process;

6) Socialism can prosper only if it plans the economy based on objective possibilities and the resources on hand.

These, and more, are fundamental concepts that are universally applicable. To ignore and reject the wealth of practical experience and knowledge accumulated in building socialism is to move in the direction opposite from the path of socialist construction.

Of course it is true that these universal concepts must be placed within the context of national peculiarities, traits and traditions. But just as there is universal sameness in the real world of capitalism and the class struggle, so there are universally applicable features in the struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

Again, how could it be otherwise? Denial flies in the face of reason and reality.

Thus, when Marxists speak of multiplicity of forms of socialism, they mean the historically determined variety of ways of manifesting its single substance – the socialist state ownership of the means of production. They have the same mode of production, and the same nature of political power. These features are characteristic of the single substance of socialism.

Denying the time-tested principles of socialist construction, Comrade Berlinguer continues to flail away at the non-existent windmills of a non-existent "Soviet model."

Searching for some kind of model, Comrade Berlinguer comes up with a "Western," and more specifically, an "Italian model." All the rhetoric about models is simply a preparation of his absurd conclusion that, "it is precisely in the area of Western Europe that we speak of a third way or stage in the struggle for socialism." Astoundingly, he adds, "the alternative is in Italy."

Why in Italy? Is not Italy still a capitalist country where the ills of dying capitalism continue to breed unemployment, poverty, exploitation and oppression?

Are we now to believe that the class struggle in Italy is different? That the ruling capitalist class is different?

Eurocommunism and "The Third Way"

When examined more closely, the "third way" of the Eurocommunists is largely a transplant of the old discredited formulas and cliches from the opportunistic swamps of social democracy.

The Eurocommunists speak in abstract gobbledygook about "no split between socialism and democracy, between social property and social control, between the means of production and forms of democratic organization and political power."

But they become very specific and exacting in their demand to discard Marxism-Leninism, proletarian internationalism and "any concept of a workers' and peasants' state."

If not workers' and peasants' state power, then whose power?

The logical answer — and one that fits into the Eurocommunist concept is the power of private corporations, landlords and other petty bourgeois elements. In the real world there are no "third way" class forces.

The Eurocommunists talk about a "democratic society" as if there are no opposing forces, no political and ideological struggles in the transition to socialism. In their fantasy world all forces will passively accept or enthusiastically welcome the socialist revolution.

In fact, they resurrect the old Bernsteinian concept of "humanizing the class struggle," which is nothing less than class peace. It means an opportunistic class partnership, class collaboration in which the interests of the working class are always subordinated to the interests of monopoly capital. No "third way" schemes can get around this bottom line of reality.

Basic Questions and Outlook

There are a number of basic questions that keep coming up:

Do these Communist leaders really believe the fabrications of the Big Lie they are advocating and spreading?

How did they land in the same orbit with the Haigs, Reagans, Weinbergers, Kissingers and Brzezinskis?

What is the longer-range outlook?

The answer to whether these Communist leaders believe their own lies is no, they do not. They are people who know better.

Some may believe that false means justify opportunistic ends. But they do know they are spreading anti-socialist lies. It is unfortunate that some in the rank and file most likely believe it is the easiest road to socialism in their countries.

Most likely many do not fully understand the terrible damage that such lies do to the international working class movement. They have not carefully thought out the consequence of these slander campaigns, how they violate the sacred ideal of working class internationalism, and, how such smear campaigns alienate class conscious workers from their parties.

To slander existing socialism undermines the concept of socialism as the solution to the problems and crises of existing capitalism.

Abandoning the Working Class and Class Struggle

In a very real and fundamental sense the attacks on real socialism are but one element, one by-product, of a creeping opportunistic abandonment of the class struggle arena, both nationally and internationally.

Much earlier, this was the essence of Comrade Berlinguer's concept which he called "the historic compromise," in which he proposed a policy of accommodation with the ruling class of Italy in order to pave the way for Communists to become a part of the Italian government.

Now, there is nothing wrong with tactical adjustments. But this was an offer to compromise the real interests of the working class and, in essence, to put the class struggle itself on the shelf. The Italian capitalist class was not asked to compromise any of its self-interest.

The same kind of equal treatment of the opposing classes is behind the thinking of the Spanish statement about the martial law in Poland that "throughout history *all* military regimes have been set up on a temporary basis and all have been prolonged." To speak of all martial law developments in the same vein is a fundamental error. It is falsifying reality. They are not the same because the working class and the capitalist class are not identical, but opposite.

To speak of all martial law in the same vein is putting Polish martial law — a very unusual development in the building of a socialist working class state — into the same bag with the military regime in Chile or the Franco regime in Spain, which did last a long time. In fact, the Spanish statement makes the false comparison openly in regard to the military regimes supporting reactionary capitalist governments.

Role of the Soviet Union

The abandonment of the class struggle arena on the world scene is also in the Italian Party's slander that,

The role of the Soviet Union *sometimes coincides* with the interests of the countries and peoples fighting against imperialist and reactionary regimes for

freedom and national liberation. But, at other times, *it runs counter* to these interests. (Italics added)

The Italian statement leaves the questions — how, where and when — these interests “run counter” unanswered. And it does so because the statement is another exercise in the substitution of lying propaganda for truth and reality. This is not only rejection of where the Soviet Union stands in the class struggle, but also where it stands in the struggle against imperialism and for national liberation. What other force in the world is as consistently anti-imperialist and on the side of national liberation as the Soviet Union?

Such vile slander is in league with the Big Lie that the Soviet Union conquers, exploits and oppresses other nations and peoples. In league with the policies of U.S. imperialism, this is an effort to separate and isolate the Soviet Union from the forces of the world revolutionary process.

Ultimate End of Opportunism

Maoism's open alliance with U S. imperialism is the logical consequence, the ultimate end of opportunism. It also started slowly.

The same abandonment of the class struggle is also clear in the continuing refusal of the Leaders of the Communist Party of Japan to take a forthright stand against Japanese imperialism. The policies of the capitalist class of Japan are not limited to “militarism ” They are basically imperialist.

Opportunists back away from taking a forthright stand against the imperialism of their own country because they do not believe it is possible to convince workers that it is in their self-interest to oppose the imperialist policies of their own country. This backing away is an accommodation and a concession to bourgeois nationalism. Opportunism and bourgeois nationalism invariably become inseparable.

Target and Purpose

From the statements I have quoted, and others, it should become crystal clear that the attacks on real socialism, the abandonment of the science of Marxism-Leninism, the rejection of the victories and achievements in establishing and building socialism are meant for and are directed, first and foremost, to the folks at home in each country. It is an attempt to opportunistically win the support of people who are influenced by the Big Lie of anti communism and anti-Sovietism. They do this by adopting the lies and distortions instead of exposing and challenging them.

Repeating the Big Lie serves as an appeal to the Big Business-controlled mass media in their countries. It is a bid to be considered "respectable and acceptable," to "get a good press." It is a way of ingratiating oneself to the ruling circles. And because U.S. imperialism is a big factor in the economy and politics of these countries, it is also an attempt to appear acceptable to the forces representing U.S. monopoly capital. It is an attempt to opportunistically get around and avoid taking on the sharp issues of the class struggle.

The leading Spanish and Italian comrades speak about a "third way" different from capitalism, but also from socialism. This means something between the countries of real socialism and the countries of capitalism. Specifically, they say the "third way" is the answer because "a certain concept of socialism has been outmoded." Or, as Brzezinski put it, "has become antiquated."

Objective Role of Opportunism

Opportunism influences sections of the working class. But as a rule the articulators and advocates, the most deeply infected and co-opted sectors, including the Communist Parties, are among the petty bourgeois elements. A basic lack of confidence in the working class is always a big factor behind opportunistic schemes to give up the class struggle. Opportunism blocks out all concepts of working class internationalism because it covers itself with rhetoric based on narrow nationalism.

To the extent that capitalism realizes that its days are numbered, it becomes ever more belligerent and combative in the ideological arena. It conducts overt and covert ideological warfare.

The pressures on working class leaders come from all sides. They are relentless and never-ending. These ideological and political pressures are both open and insidious, blatant and subtle. There are frontal attacks as well as flank attacks. There are threats and bribes, flattery and seduction. The enemy uses sugar coated pills and silver hooks. There are frame ups and payoffs. They work to soften up and to corrupt.

Throughout history, the great majority of working class organizations and leaders have resisted and rejected such pressures. The history of the working class movement is a history of proud, heroic and militant fightback against opportunism.

But there are exceptions. There have been and there are those who succumb to these pressures.

Opportunism is a no-fight, no-struggle policy. It is a policy of capitulation, of giving up and selling out the interests of the working class. It is a policy that is covered up by abstract, radical-sounding phrasemongering.

In the final analysis, it does not really matter under what subjective illusions the policies of opportunism are carried out. What matters is that objectively they support the policies of domestic capitalism and world imperialism. They support and run interference for the enemy.

Whatever the revisionist-opportunists may claim about their motivations, their intentions do not determine the objective role they play. That depends on the concrete content and conditions of the class struggle between capitalism and socialism, on what they do for the contending sides, which in this case proves to be for capitalism. Objectively, they stand on the side of capitalism, according to their own words and deeds.

Lenin once observed:

It is not a matter of intentions, motives or words, but the objective situation, independent of them, that determines the fate and significance of slogans, of tactics or, in general, of the trend of a given party or group (V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1963, Vol. 19, p.262.)

Some Conclusions and Lessons

In the words and deeds of the leaders of the Italian and Spanish Parties there are important lessons, both for working class parties as well as for individual Communists, including us.

A most important lesson is to understand that opportunism never appears full-blown. It sneaks in on tiptoes, wearing Hush Puppies. It is a slow, insidious development. Therefore, the time to stop the infection from spreading is when it appears in small and seemingly insignificant ways.

The opportunism expressed in these Party statements is opportunism tailored to the relationship of forces in a world where there are two competing socio-economic systems. It is, therefore, opportunism in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. That is where the so-called "third way" comes from. It is a balancing act between the two systems. But the damage is done to the working class and socialism.

Off the Communist Road

What motivates the leading cadres of these parties to develop and adopt this slippery course off the Communist road? Is there any logic behind their

policies of objective support for imperialism, Big Lie anti-Sovietism, anti-socialism and anti-working class, unscientific concepts?

Part of the answer is that when Communist leaders do not view phenomena from the standpoint of the class struggle, the question of taking sides, of being a partisan of the working class, a partisan of socialism is not a matter of principle.

In such an outlook, taking the side of the working class is just one of the options.

When one does not accept the class struggle, or the unique, advanced role of the working class, there is no motive or compulsion to accept the concept of proletarian internationalism. The concept that the working class is not necessarily your class can also lead to the concept that the capitalist class is not necessarily your enemy.

Certainly, in the two documents there is no evidence that capitalism and the capitalist class are the enemy. There is, however, much evidence that socialism, the Soviet Union and the countries of real socialism are seen as the problem because the main fire is directed at them.

Achilles Heel of Opportunism

Opportunism is a dead-end street. History is a stern teacher. For the working class, the main lesson is that unity and struggle are prerequisites and preconditions for victory. Catering and accommodating to world imperialism never resulted in lasting victories. And the class struggle on the world scale — between world capitalism and world socialism — is no exception to this rule. The struggles against opportunism and revisionism are features of the class struggle.

The fortunes of opportunism are tied to the declining fortunes of capitalism. Truth and objective reality are the Achilles Heel of opportunism. Anything and anyone tied to the declining and decaying system of capitalism is doomed to extinction.

Everything and everyone tied to the world revolutionary process, to the building of socialism, to the working class movement and to national liberation are destined to live and achieve history's greatest advance — to socialism and communism.

AFRICA NOTES AND COMMENT

by A. Azad

SUDAN: THE ROAD TO DISASTER

In May, 1969, Nimeiry came to power following a military coup. Ever since his regime has plunged the country and people into an ever-deepening crisis. Sudan demonstrates with crystal clarity that a regime totally dependent upon imperialism and obsequiously acting at its behest can never come to grips with the problems of economic growth, under-development and the welfare of the people.

Towards the end of last year and the first few months of this year Sudan was rocked by an upsurge of popular actions in various parts of the country. University and high school students staged a series of strikes which were met by ruthless police and military repression. In response to this repression large sections of professionals openly expressed their support for the actions and demands of the students.

During this period workers in the textile and food industries held a general strike. In some enterprises the workers set up "people's

committees" to pursue their demands. In Khartoum, the capital and most important area of struggle, demonstrators expressed their anger by smashing up shops and stalls. In fact the city was, for a time, virtually under siege. The army sealed off all the routes in and out of the city, and bridges and other strategic installations were under military occupation. Certain areas were subject to commando type raids in which the local residents suffered bodily injury as well as severe damage to their property.

Trade union leaders were arrested, hundreds of workers were fired, the militant railwaymen's union was forcibly disbanded and its leaders arrested. One hundred functionaries of the Sudanese Communist Party and hundreds of members of other opposition forces — the Al Ansar Sect, National Unionist Party, Baathists and others — were flung into prisons and concentration camps. Activists of trade unions representing teachers, engineers and technical workers were suspended. All these repressive actions were conducted in the vain hope of stemming the growing resistance of the people of Sudan.

Nimeiry blamed the working people and mythical Libyan agents for the deteriorating situation. His only solution is to hang on to power by all means possible and to carry out cosmetic changes among the personnel staffing the ruling regime. But this cannot solve the basic socio-economic problems confronting the country.

In the past 13 years the Sudanese bourgeoisie and foreign monopolies have amassed vast fortunes by ruthlessly exploiting the natural resources and labour of the country. Towards the end of 1980 the balance of payments deficit had reached \$1 billion and the external debt \$4 billion. The regime cannot even pay the interest on the debts, let alone the principal.

Over the last three years scores of industrial enterprises have closed down, at others production is only 25 per cent of capacity and workers in the state and private sectors have been made redundant. Under pressure from the International Monetary Fund the Sudanese pound was devalued, subsidies on staple foods such as vegetable oil, bread and sugar, were ended. As a result there was a 40 per cent increase in the price of oil and the prices of basic foodstuffs sky-rocketed. Furthermore, spending on public health and education was slashed. Today Sudan, which many specialists believe could be the breadbasket of the region, is facing a famine. The rich are getting richer and the poor poorer and the country is plagued by innumerable social problems and conflicts.

In a statement the Central Committee Secretariat of the Sudanese Communist Party points out:

"The growing rate of gangsterism and robbery in towns, armed attacks on traders and lorries in the countryside, and the spread of bribes for the simplest services in state institutions are sinister forebodings of the impending danger which warn that the country could be plunged into total anarchy." (*Information Bulletin*, Prague, No 6, 1982. p 66).

In an attempt to halt this slide to disaster the IMF, under pressure from Nimeiry's masters, US imperialism, have granted the regime a \$224 million dollar stand-by 12-month credit. The USA and Saudi Arabia have pledged \$375 million in order to cover Sudan's chronic balance of payments deficit. But these are only short-term measures which may help to perpetuate the myth that Sudan is solvent, but can never solve the pressing problems facing the country.

The Sudanese Communist Party is waging an heroic struggle under conditions of mass repression and illegality and it has put forward a number of proposals designed to find a way out of the present impasse. It has called for and is actively campaigning for a broad Front of Struggle for Democracy and Salvation of the country. This would be composed of all those opposed to the Nimeiry regime. This Front will strive to convince the masses that an alternative road is possible whereby the people could be certain of obtaining at least the basic necessities of life. In its statement the Central Committee Secretariat of the Sudanese Communist Party declared:

"Today, when the people's very existence is being threatened, when the well-being of their families and nourishment of their children are in jeopardy, and when the homeland's sovereignty, national wealth and unity are in danger, the Sudanese Communist Party address all political parties and trends, all trade union organisations, peasant and student associations, women and the young, with a programme for launching a daily struggle — propaganda, political and organisational — to mobilise the mass movement, and also unions of Sudanese abroad, against the threat of the country's total disintegration, to save the homeland from destruction . . .

As past experience has shown mere complaints and expressions of discontent and indignation will not help to amplify the mass movement or inspire the people to political struggle. Neglect of painstaking everyday work among the masses in expectation of spontaneous powerful upsurge in their activity undermines the possibilities of the political forces and leads to inertia among them" (Ibid., p.68)

GHANA: CONSOLIDATION CONTINUES

The revolution in Ghana has its roots amongst the workers, peasants, progressive intellectuals, student movements such as the National Union of Ghanaian students and some sections of the middle strata. In the first few months of this year the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) has taken steps to consolidate political power. The most advanced elements in Ghana recognise that for this to succeed the old state apparatus must be dismantled. A new type of army, civil service and judiciary has to be created.

In his speech marking the 25th anniversary of Ghanaian independence, Flight Lt. Rawlings, chairman of the PNDC, declared:

“Power should find its rightful place among the people at the grass roots rather than with the few who misuse it for personal gain.”

To this end a number of important steps have already been taken. They are:

(a) The setting up of People's Defence Committees (PDC's) throughout the country. These committees have been formed at work places and also within the police and army. Senior officers are precluded from holding positions in these committees. This is one way in which the other ranks seek to limit the power and influence of their officers. The PDC's have in a short space of time exposed many crimes of a socio-economic and cultural nature.

(b) The progressive political parties which had prepared for the December 31 coup have formed a united front.

(c) A number of former trade union officials, including A.M. Issifu, secretary-general of the Ghana TUC, have been forced to resign as a result of pressure from rank-and-file workers.

(d) The former Youth Council has been disbanded and a committee of 15 formed to investigate how best to organise and mobilise the youth.

(e) Progressive women are organising a new national women's committee and

(f) A voluntary labour campaign by students and other sections of the population has already achieved some results. Cocoa worth at least £50 million has been brought in from the countryside, roads have been repaired and rubbish heaps cleared.

In the economic sphere the PNDC is aware that fundamental to the consolidation process is the mobilisation, organisation and satisfaction of the basic needs of the peasantry. The situation is complicated by the fact that the relations of production are not feudal. In Ghana every family has the right to use land through the line of lineage, so that many peasants feel that, since they do not pay rent or kind to anyone, they are not exploited.

To meet the problem the progressive forces are endeavouring to show the peasants that the real contradictions lie in the fact that their surplus is appropriated by the capitalist sector which makes all the profits. There are also plantations in private hands. Presumably it would be easier to turn these into cooperatives.

It is also the policy of the PNDC to cut down on the vast food imports which place a heavy burden on the country's financial resources. The Council has embarked on a policy to reduce the food import bill by 50 per cent by 1983.

The Council is aware that it is impossible to consolidate the revolution within the framework of the old socio-economic structures and has created an economic programme. An immediate solution is needed to get the factories to produce at or near their capacity. Prior to the revolution the factories were producing at or below 25 per cent of their capacity.

Like all other countries in Africa, Ghana has to come to grips with the complex national question. The problems created by tribalism, ethnic consciousness and regionalism can never be underestimated. However, a harbinger of things to come is that during and immediately after the revolutionary change class solidarity was a component part of the process.

Many Enemies

But the new Ghana has many enemies, international and national. Imperialism and its agencies such as the multi-nationals and the CIA are attempting to thwart the process of consolidation. They fear that a revolutionary Ghana will have a profound impact on the region and beyond. US imperialism sought to use countries like the Ivory Coast, Togo and Upper Volta to launch a counter-revolutionary invasion. Fortunately this was nipped in the bud, but the danger is ever present. The PNDC has classified its local enemies as the comprador bourgeoisie, especially the representatives of the multi-nationals, Lebanese, Indian and Syrian businessmen, sections of the petty bourgeoisie such as the market women, professionals fearful of losing their very lucrative private practices and reactionary, corrupt politicians and army and police officers.

The attack on the petty traders, especially the market women, is popular since these people made huge profits from charging exorbitant prices for basic consumer goods such as eggs, bread, sugar and meat. But the petty traders cannot be put into the same category as the comprador bourgeoisie and reactionary circles within the old army, police and political structures. Nor, it seems from the experience of other countries, can the distribution network and services provided by the retail traders be efficiently organised by the state in the initial phase of the revolution. Therefore, whilst it is correct to ensure strict control over the activities of these sections, it is important to win their struggle as well as that of sections even of the patriotic national bourgeoisie for the aims of the national democratic revolution.

The main enemy remains imperialism which will use all means economic, political, ideological and diplomatic — to destabilise the government. This was emphasised by Rawlings who declared:

"We will keep our guard, especially against those unpatriotic and selfish persons who have lost their chance to take the people of this country for a ride . . . We know how imperialism can try to blackmail us economically, using a whole arsenal of weapons. But we are not deterred. This struggle, which we anticipate will be long and difficult, can only end in one thing, the defeat of the old and corrupt establishment and the victory of a revolution, Ghana's revolution, a revolution for Africa!"

The PNDC has already undertaken a number of important actions in the international field. Recently a high level delegation led by Chris Akim, a leading member of the Council, visited a number of socialist countries, including the Soviet Union and Cuba. In the course of these visits the delegation expressed the desire to benefit from the rich experience of the socialist countries in building a new society, free from the exploitation of man by man and from the scourge of poverty, hunger and disease. They expressed appreciation for the consistent principled support given by the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community to the national liberation movements in Africa and other parts of the world.

The Council is aware that the present tense and dangerous international situation is a result of the bellicose, cold war, anti-Soviet, anti-communist policies pursued by the Reagan administration. Already the new government has established mutually beneficial contacts with Libya and other progressive countries and organisations. They fully support the just struggles of the people of Namibia and South Africa led by SWAPO and

the ANC, the revolutionary forces of El Salvador and in other parts of the world. An ANC delegation has already visited Ghana and the Ghanaian leaders are optimistic that, as soon as they put their own economy in order, they will be able to demonstrate their solidarity in material terms.

MALI: FORMATION OF A NEW PARTY

Recently a new Party, the Party of Revolution and Democracy (PMRD) was formed in Mali. It has declared that it is a Marxist-Leninist Party with the long term objective of building a socialist society in Mali. In the interim period it is committed to struggle for a popular and democratic revolution. The PMRD has issued a manifesto to the workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals, soldiers and college and school students. In the manifesto it outlines what it considers to be the main tasks of the popular and democratic revolution.

In the economic sphere the manifesto demands an end to foreign domination, mainly French; a new relationship between the public and private sectors; a renewed state sector controlling the key positions of the economy; the creation of conditions favouring monetary independence; and a popular planning policy with the participation of the workers. It calls for agricultural reform and the introduction of a flexible cooperative system.

On the political level the manifesto calls for the demonstration of political life and the guarantee of trade union rights and democratic liberties; popular control over the country's administrative and political institutions and the reorganisation of the armed forces. In foreign policy the party is pledged to fight for peace and for African unity against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, apartheid and Zionism.

The manifesto also calls for a complete restructuring of the policies relating to health, education and culture.

In the manifesto the MRDP is severely critical of the government led by Moussa Traoré. It claims that since Traoré took power in a coup d'état which overthrew Modibo Keita in November 1968, the people have been subject to a reign of terror, dictatorship and corruption.

The Mali economy is in dire straits and still too dependent on France and the EEC. Furthermore under pressure from the imperialists, the Mali government has shed some important aspects of state control, handing them over to private enterprise.

The Union Democratique du Peuple Malieu (UDPM), the only legal party, was formed in 1979 to give greater credibility to the regime. Within this organisation there has been an ongoing fight between some of the more patriotic and honest elements and the conservative and reactionary elements. At its last congress in February 1982 some drastic changes in personnel were made. Moussa Traoré was re-elected Secretary-General, but three of the most powerful officials, the political secretary M. Sory Coulibaly, the Secretary for External Affairs M. Mohamadoun Ag Mahami and the Administrative Secretary M. Amadou Thiam, lost their positions.

Despite the economic and political difficulties and setbacks, there are patriotic forces within the UDPM which are interested in taking a stand against neo-colonialism and imperialism. Though in recent years the state sector of the economy has been gradually run down, the state nevertheless still exercises important control. Thanks to pressure from the masses the progressive measures carried out by Modibo Keita in the economy and foreign policy sectors have not been irrevocably reversed.

It is of great significance that relations with the Soviet Union did not deteriorate. Traoré has refused to succumb to the policy of anti-Sovietism and has kept all the previous links and contacts. Moreover Mali has signed an agreement with the Soviet Union which is to supply equipment and technical assistance to mine extensive gold deposits in the country.

On a number of vital African and international questions the Mali government has taken progressive positions — it supports MPLA, our own struggle and Polisario. At a time when US imperialism has been pressuring African countries to take up an anti-Libyan posture, Mali is developing contacts with Libya. In February this year the Arab Libyan-Mali Bank was created to develop Mali-Libyan cooperation. The headquarters are in Bamako.

WHY I JOINED THE COMMUNIST **PARTY**

COMMUNISTS MUST RENDER SELFLESS SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE

By Mthetheleli

It used to worry me why the South African ruling clique from the time of Malan, even earlier than that, to the present used to brand any of its opponents a communist. This made responsible, thinking men try to find out why the protagonists of Hitler were declaring their opponents terrorists and treating them like creatures when they themselves were practising national and racial oppression so nakedly and shamelessly and with violence and brutality reminiscent of Nazi Germany. The conclusion that one reached was that the regime that was declaring its opponents criminals and terrorists was in fact a terrorist one. This regime was not just terroristic to the people of South Africa alone; its policy of apartheid had been declared by the international court a crime against humanity.

It also became clear to me that the racial discrimination that is being practised in our country is in fact a mechanism of capitalism and therefore the atrocities that are being carried out in the country are the end results of capitalism when it is faced by the whole might of the people. The events of June 16, 1976, are still very fresh in our minds. These events made young men and women leave their mothers and families and go into exile to acquire better skills for fighting the enemy. Because no one was prepared to live like an outlaw in the land of his birth.

Not surprisingly, the majority of them found their way into the ranks of the ANC. It was only when one was in the ANC that one came to grips with reality, that one was exposed to all sorts of literature including the Marxist-Leninist literature — the theoretical foundation of communism. It was only when one understood the teaching of Marxism-Leninism that one began to understand the world as it really is.

As I became more and more involved in the African National Congress, the only authentic representative of the aspirations of the people of South Africa, the movement for freedom and equality, it became clear to me that the most consistent, sacrificing members of the Congress Movement were communists, members of the South African Communist Party. Members of the Party were always the ones who bore the brunt for their lofty ideals. They were always prepared to die for what they believed was right. They were always prepared to serve in the Congress Movement headed by the ANC and ready for any sacrifice in the process. We have in mind giants like Johannes Nkosi who died on December 16, 1930, during the anti-pass demonstration.

I decided to join the Party for the simple reason that I had to serve my people as long as I live. Even when South Africa has been freed of the scourge of racism and apartheid, one has to continue fighting for the interest of the working class and peasantry in South Africa, to fight for a Socialist South Africa. But as we all know, the essential precondition for a socialist South Africa and the key for future advance of the Party is the destruction of colonialism and apartheid in our country. The Party had therefore decided to loyally serve in the national liberation struggle led by the ANC and make its contribution for a Freedom Charter. The minimum programme of the Party, "The Road to S.A. Freedom", fully agrees with the Freedom Charter and reinforces it

Unforgettable

The day I joined the Party is an unforgettable day in my life. As Marshal Zhukov puts it, "I have forgotten many things but I will remember the

day I joined the Party as long as I live. Since then I have tried to keep all my thoughts, aspirations and actions in accordance with the demands of a Party member. When it came to fighting our country's enemies, I bore in mind the Party demand that a communist must be an example in rendering selfless service to our people".

The communists in South Africa have always been sadistically tortured, maimed and killed but they always bore in mind the words of Marshal Zhukov that the Party demands that all communists must be an example in rendering selfless service to the people. The South African Communists have served our people up until the last days of their lives. They stood firm in their beliefs, they never wavered an inch. Instead of divulging information to the enemy they turned the fascist courts into political platforms. They followed the example of Georgi Dimitrov who in the face of the Nazis in the Reichstag Fire Trial defended himself as a communist, defended his political honour as a revolutionary, challenged the audacity of the Nazis to put an anti-communist crime to the account of communism.

We have many giants like Georgi Dimitrov in South Africa. We have stalwarts like Bram Fischer who also turned the fascist court into a political platform, who challenged the authority of the court to charge him with sabotage, who told the court that when a man is on trial for his political beliefs only two choices are open to him, either to confess or justify his beliefs; and he decided to justify his beliefs and not to betray his cause. We have giants and veterans like Uncle JB and Moses Kotane who even when he was bed-ridden served the Party up to the last straw of his life.

Principles and Personality

These are the men who motivated me to join the Party. These are the men who made me understand that when joining the Party you must be prepared to work tirelessly. They made me understand that in my duties in the ANC and MK I have to be exemplary and be a torch-bearer for the comrades. I had to be modest and be prepared to learn from the comrades. They taught me that to be swollen-headed and pompous when you are a member of the Party is to do disservice to the teachings and science of Marxism-Leninism.

The Party that these veterans and stalwarts spent most of their lives to build is now a solid, united Party that has not only understood that South Africa can never be liberated without the liberation of the working class, but also understood that the working class of South Africa can only be

emancipated with the emancipation of the African people. The Party has fully accepted the leading role of the ANC in the National Democratic Revolution and has modestly served under it.

This is the Party that one joined, the Party that this year celebrates its 61st Anniversary. Our Party is very strong not just in numbers but ideologically. The Party has experienced all kinds of hardships in working clandestinely under all conditions.

Whether America, Britain, France or West Germany wants it or not the Party is going to build socialism in South Africa. The working class and peasantry in South Africa under the dynamic leadership of the SACP can never shed blood in vain. They want to determine their future. Socialism will triumph in South Africa. Communism will be built in the soil of South Africa.



FAMILY PLANNING IN SOUTH AFRICA — A KIND OF GENOCIDE?

by Letsema

“South Africa's top health administrator has called for ‘strong measures’ to bring down the population growth, especially among blacks. Failure to do so will result in ‘a plunge into chaos and misery’ ” — *The Johannesburg Star*, November 11, 1981.

The top health administrator is Dr. J. de Beer, director-general of the Department of Health and Welfare. He was giving evidence to the Science Committee of the State President's Council and warned:

“If strong voluntary measures are not introduced and accepted now, circumstances will deteriorate to such an extent that a lowering of fertility would in any case have to follow, whether by compulsory measures from the State, or by a rise in mortality and misery”.

"Compulsory measures" by the State means, in the context of South Africa, compulsory sterilisation of blacks at the behest of the white minority regime — something totally unacceptable to the majority of the population.

The launching of the so-called National Family Planning Programme by the Pretoria regime in 1974 has to be understood in the context of the "solution" which the racist regime has formulated for what it regards as the "native question". Ever since Van Riebeeck landed in 1652 the white minority have sought to establish their dominance and control over the black majority. With the discovery of diamonds and gold and the onset of capitalist industrialisation, the problem became more complicated and the pursuit of a solution became more urgent. For various reasons, including the vast discrepancies in numbers between the black and white populations, as well as the overriding need for large quantities of cheap labour, the resolution of this "question" was directed away from physical extermination towards physical and social subjugation and control. The "solution" was formulated in the policy of separate development, which has achieved its most rigorous and extensive application during the period of Nationalist rule in their programme of apartheid.

Population control has been an integral part of the strategy for the separate economic development of the Bantustans. In 1954 the Tomlinson Commission reported:

"... it cannot be assumed that their attitude towards reproduction will change quickly enough in a spontaneous manner to realise the fruits of economic development in the form of a higher material standard of living, either in its entirety or to any considerable degree. What is indicated, therefore, appears to be a campaign for the promotion of planned parenthood. Doubt still exists as to the success attainable by such a campaign and as to the efficiency of the means that can be used for family limitation. Nevertheless, the Commission would recommend that the possibility of the propagation of planned parenthood be investigated."¹

In 1959 an article in the Afrikaans press entitled "South Africa's Population Problem" by Philip H. Moore elaborated:

"If it were not for the population factor separate development might be the answer . . . and it could be made effective with birth control. At present the policy of the Union Government is to institute separate development but to take no action to control numerical increase. Separate development, if it is to be

pursued as a final solution, should not only incorporate population control but should be envisaged on a continental basis and not only within the borders of the Union. This action — a massive birth control programme — is the only one that will permit European survival and at the same time be acceptable to the rest of the world.”²

And in 1979, the twin themes of the McCrystal Report on the future of KwaZulu were land reform and birth control, with population trends being regarded as the major factor inhibiting the creation of

“an engine of growth in KwaZulu which will (permit) at least a partly autonomous growth process . . . a major effort to control births is therefore a high priority in the development process.”³

What is true for KwaZulu is true for all the Bantustans. Although fully aware of the desperate overcrowding in the reserves, the regime aggravates the situation by forcibly removing hundreds of thousands more people from the “white” areas and dumping them there, advocating ‘family planning’ as the means of alleviating the crisis. By reducing their numbers, so the apartheid planners argue, the blacks can increase their individual share of the national income and land which has been allotted to them, though the total amount will not be increased by one iota. Underlying these ideas for development are Malthusian assumptions about the causes of poverty. Instead of regarding poverty as the product of a particular social system, they say the poor make themselves poor by having too many children. Hence, they argue, the solution to poverty lies in ensuring that the poor have fewer children, rather than distributing the wealth of society more equitably.

A Question of Numbers

White minority thinking has been dominated by worry over the difference in size between the black and white populations, the former constituting some 76% of the total. The political and numerical “swart gevaar” has been the rallying call around which the exclusively white electorate has been urged not only to support and maintain Nationalist rule, but also to have more babies. In January 1982 the Gereformeerde Kerk was reported to be planning ‘an information campaign to counter a declining number of white births in South Africa’. (*Rand Daily Mail* 20.1.1982). Notions of racial superiority combined with a belief in their God-given right to rule have dominated the thinking underlying the population control

programme. This was most explicitly revealed in contributions made at a symposium on the 'Population Explosion in South Africa' organised by the Northern Transvaal branch of the South African Medical Association in 1971.⁴

Amongst the contributors was Dr. Chris Troskie, past president of the Medical Association of South Africa, who argued that there were two basic groups among mankind, the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. The first group he considered to be intelligent with production potential, a sense of responsibility and "civilisation". The second group, however, lacked any sense of responsibility and "breed recklessly". Hence a balance between these two groups had to be kept. He went on to add that the old, the ill and children were burdens upon the community which had to be tolerated. However, those who could contribute, but did not, should not be accepted as a burden by the producing community i.e. "the haves". It was his considered opinion that the genetic composition of the population, which was determined at birth, had to be improved, if necessary by eliminating inferior genetic material and that therefore sterilization of defective people was essential. Dr. N. J. van Rensburg, Deputy Superintendent of the H. F. Verwoerd Hospital in Pretoria, likening population growth to cancer, said that if a body has cancer, curative measures are taken, otherwise the cancer spreads through the whole body and destroys it. So too with population growth!

The symposium, which urgently called for national coordination and the rapid implementation of a programme to control population growth, emphasising the need to concentrate on the black majority in particular, outlined the basic strategy which was adopted by the regime three years later when it launched the "National Family Planning Programme".

A further motivation is profit. Population control is big business. In his State of the Union address in January, 1965, the United States President L. B. Johnson said: "\$5 invested in birth control is worth \$100 invested in economic growth." Robert Macnamara, former President of the World Bank and a major contributor to international population control programmes, elaborated:

"Family Planning programmes are less costly than conventional development projects . . . (and) successful projects of this kind will yield very high economic returns."⁵

The degree of economic interest in 'family planning' can be seen by looking, for example, at the organisations that sponsored the 1971

Symposium. They included, amongst others, the Anglo-American Corporation, Old Mutual Life Association, Total South Africa Ltd., the City Council of Pretoria and various pharmaceutical companies manufacturing contraceptive devices, such as Upjohn Ltd. and Covan Pharmaceutical Products (Pty) Ltd.

Method

Birth control clinics were first introduced in South Africa in 1932, in the middle of the depression when there were hundreds of thousands of 'poor whites', mostly Afrikaners. Initially these clinics confined their activities to the white community. Later the state became involved with their functioning and they began to operate, with relatively little success, amongst the black population. By 1967 clinics were increasingly being handed over to local municipalities and peri-urban authorities as the State became more involved in promoting population control. 1973 saw the transfer of training facilities from the Family Planning Association of South Africa to the Department of Health and in 1974 the "National Family Planning Programme" was launched. The Department of Health stated the following to be its aims:

- "*to improve the socio-economic and health status of individuals by persuading them to prevent unwanted pregnancies as well as efficient family building;
- *to meet the universal need for knowledge of family planning and to supply family planning aids and services especially to the most disadvantaged people;
- *to assist with the improvement of the socio-economic malconditions of the communities where these have been caused by a high birth-rate,
- *to execute this programme in a vigorous way with due regard to cultural background of the population groups."

Prior to the launching of the programme at the suggestion of the Pharmaceutical Association of South Africa, a scheme was accepted to distribute the Pill, free of charge, to all women, irrespective of race, age or marital status on production of a medical certificate from a family planning clinic, private doctor or state hospital at any of the 2,342 pharmacists in the country.

In terms of the immediate goals, the aim was "to protect by medical methods" at least 50% of the female population who were exposed "to the risk of conception" within five years. In addition an effective network of 'family planning' clinics was to be set up so that they would be "within easy reach of the public".⁷

Whilst in geographical terms the programme is national, it is the black majority who are to be the prime targets, as it is they who are considered incapable of controlling their family size and therefore responsible for the "population explosion" in South Africa.

The notion of family planning as used by the regime must be placed in the context of the general attitude and policy it has towards the black family. Black family life is systematically destroyed by the apartheid system, which physically separates husbands and wives, and parents and children, through the migrant labour system and the enforced settlement of what are regarded as non-productive labour units in the reserves. Family life is considered to be a privilege and not a right, subject to the discretion of the authorities and 'the needs of the economy'. Family planning in this context literally means controlling the capacity of the black oppressed majority to reproduce, with a view to maintaining their subjugation by the white minority.

It is revealing that the Department of Health, in stressing a shift in policy from curative to preventative medicine, placed 'family planning' at the head of the list of priorities. In 1980, however, only 2% of the health budget was allocated to preventative medicine.⁸

In 1973 there were fewer than 5 fully trained 'family planning' doctors in South Africa.⁹ By 1976 a team of 671 personnel had been brought together composed of 16 full-time and 137 part-time doctors, 242 full-time, 81 part-time and 195 farm nurses, to carry out this programme in the 'white areas'. This team was increased to 835 medical personnel in 1977 and in that year 10 decentralised units were introduced in the rural areas. Further 587 "educational advisers" were added to the original team.¹⁰ At the same time the regime rationalised and extended the establishment and functioning of the already existing clinics, many of which had until then been run by the Family Planning Association of SA, providing free of charge family planning services at state, provincial and local authority level. In 1976 the Minister of Health reported that there were 2,045 'family planning' clinics and mobile clinics. By 1978 the number had grown to 3,000 and contraceptive techniques and advice were available at 7,716 'family planning points' in South Africa. (It is not clear whether this figure includes the services available in the Bantustans as separate health departments were established there in 1976).

Between 1973/74 and 1976/77 expenditure on 'family planning' had increased by 266%, from R1,667,126 to over R6 million, excluding expenditure in the Bantustans.¹¹

In terms of the success rate of the programme, the Department of Health statistics published in the Annual Report for 1976 are very revealing:

Population	Aim for 1976	Number 'protected'
White	304 191	66 775
Coloured	168 839	218 126
Indian	56 230	40 391
African	624 804	559 896

Whilst 22% of the white target population was 'protected' in this period, 89.6% of the African, 71.8% of the Indian and 129.2% of the Coloured target populations were 'protected'. Referring to this success the Minister of Health enthused.

"As far as the Coloureds are concerned they have exceeded their target . . . the birth rate of the Coloured population was approximately 45/1,000 four years ago. This went down to a little over 28/1,000 last year."¹³

Technique

The implementation of this programme is characterised by a two-fold strategy: at the ideological level a massive propaganda and 'educative' campaign and at the practical level the procedure of 'protection'.

A. The Techniques of Persuasion

Starting from the assumption that there is general hostility towards family planning, especially amongst the black oppressed community, a vigorous and massive 'educational' and propaganda campaign has been launched through the agency in particular of the Family Planning Association which is used precisely because it is not perceived to be a direct government agent, although in fact it is funded and controlled by the state. Lectures, films, slide shows, comics and pamphlets, provided free of charge, in conjunction with radio and television, constitute the means by which the idea of 'family planning' is spread. The white elite is drawn into this campaign as an active participant in 'educating' the blacks with whom they come into contact on the benefits of family planning. Thus *Fair Lady*, for example, carried an advertisement which pictures a white woman pouring a cup of tea in her kitchen whilst an African woman cuts a melon in the background. The white woman addresses the reader:

"Family planning is my baby too! Last time my domestic had an unplanned pregnancy I let her work until the end because I thought the money would help her. But I couldn't help feeling that it was conscience money. I felt guilty for not

having told her about family planning sooner. Today, I know as an employer, my duties don't stop at paying my domestic a good salary. Or providing her with food, clothing and a roof over her head. They go beyond that to a sincere interest in her family life. That's why I discuss family planning with her and take her to the nearest clinic where she can get all the guidance she needs. Apart from helping her and her family towards a happier planned life, I have also helped myself with a domestic who is more efficient and devoted because her mind is free of family problems. So if you have a domestic – or even a gardener – remember, family planning is your baby too!"

Attached to the advertisement was a coupon entitled "Help Your Domestic Plan a Smaller Family for a Bigger Future" which promised further information from the regime's Family Planning Department.¹⁴

In rural areas farmers' wives order films and invite nurses and medical advisers to give lectures to 'their' workers.¹⁵ The question of whether the domestic or farm workers wish to fall in with the plans of their employers becomes secondary, as unwillingness to cooperate carries with it the threat of losing your job, bringing into question the 'voluntary' nature of the programme.

In the reserves, 'family planning' has been adopted as the priority health programme, with sex education being introduced in KwaZulu, for example. Little information is available as to the manner of its operation but there is widespread opposition to it which is reflected in statements made by administrators of the puppet governments.¹⁶

Industry, likewise, is actively engaged in the promotional campaign. In 1976 a study by the University of the Western Cape reported that "through the cooperation of a mining group, mine workers were introduced to the concept of family planning."¹⁷

Similar education programmes have been introduced at car assembly plants, factories, large department stores etc. Migrant workers are given lectures on family planning and VD at the point of intake in Langa.¹⁸

Since the research revealed that there is opposition to population control particularly on the part of black men, special attention is being directed towards blacks.¹⁹ In the Orange Free State, for example, a clinic was set up at the Polyflora factory, which employs 350 black women, 95% of whom are of child bearing age and 60% are under 20. This clinic is run weekly and is sponsored by the state and local authorities, with donations from Polyflora itself and the S B Witherow Trust. Factory buses are put at the disposal of the clinic to transport those who need to see a doctor to the municipal clinic once a week.²⁰

The attention paid by industry to "family planning" is revealing in view of the fact that only 1 factory in 30 has minimal industrial health care facilities and that industrialists spend very little money on and do not devote much time to the prevention of occupational diseases, as was found by the 1976 Erasmus Commission.²¹

All in all, the State, industry and the white elite work hand in glove to promote the population control programme amongst the oppressed black majority.²²

The black community is also solicited to act as agents in implementing this policy. In fact their incorporation into the scheme is regarded as the key to its success. All the reserves have special allocations for family planning and, not surprisingly, it is viewed as the priority health campaign. Whilst the programme is reported to be flourishing it is meeting very serious grass-roots opposition because, as some doctors who work in the reserves concede, the high infant and child mortality rate, which depletes the under-5 population by half, provides little incentive for rural blacks to limit their families and especially not to undergo sterilization.

In urban areas, black field workers are trained as "motivators" to overcome any resistance which they may encounter. The training courses are run by the Family Planning Association, the Transvaal branch of which reported in 1974 that 25 courses of varying duration were run, involving 348 students.²³ Apart from conventional and explicit motivational work

"... street corners, beer halls and park gossiping ... is not done by people who appear to be do-gooders or propagandists, but is, in fact, a chatting up process by an educator, who by clothes, language and idiom appears to be one of the group, and skilfully introduces the subject and indirectly controls the arguments and knowledge of family planning."²⁴

In the Greater Cape Town area no less than 400 posts for field workers and 40 for supervisors had been created by 1977 to ensure local community participation in the scheme.

B. The Techniques of Implementation

Whilst in the early fifties the racist administrators could not envisage the technical means of implementing a mass programme of population control, subsequent scientific developments soon altered this state of affairs.

The provision and application of contraceptive techniques, when the propaganda is dispensed with, are frequently accompanied by ignorance and fear on the part of the recipients and the use of coercion and sometimes compulsion on the part of the administrators. The literature given out by the clinics — usually pamphlets — states what the contraceptive technique is, how it is used and what the chances are of falling pregnant. But no indication is given that there may be risks involved and that various techniques can have unintended side-effects. The four main techniques propagated are (i) oral contraception (OCs) — the Pill; (ii) Intrauterine Devices (IUDs) such as 'the loop' and 'the coil'; (iii) injectable contraceptives — specifically Depo Provera; and (iv) sterilization and vasectomy. Preference appears to be given to those techniques which minimise the individual woman's personal control and maximise effectiveness — namely IUDs, injections and sterilization.

i) Oral Contraception. (OCs)

Oral contraceptives were first introduced in South Africa in 1962. The Pill, as OCs are commonly referred to, is freely available at all pharmacies and "family planning" points and is accepted by many. However, because it is considered "to have a high rate of patient failure in African communities"²⁵ it is the method of contraception least preferred by "family planners". The taking of the Pill is at the discretion of the individual user and should she decide to have a child or if she develops side effects she can stop taking the Pill; in that way she can exercise some control over her state of health and capacity to reproduce. The main drawback of the Pill from the point of view of the planners is that the user has to remember to take it daily and consistently in order to avoid becoming pregnant, and the planners are sceptical that this responsibility will be efficiently discharged by black women. The other disadvantage, from the planners' point of view, is the added time and cost which administration of the Pill requires. Professional medical standards and practice require that physical and pelvic examination, on a regular basis, form part of medical procedure accompanying the prescription of OCs. Because costs and numbers take priority, however, the planners would prefer to dispense with such formalities. Of course OCs can be distributed without routine examination, as is the practice in Namibia²⁶ and might well be in South Africa as well in areas where the work load of medical personnel practising amongst the oppressed is heavy²⁷. Whilst there is a considerable variety of OCs on the market, the State limits the number available at the clinics, as choice is considered unnecessary.²⁸

ii) IUDs

IUDs come closer to meeting requirements demanded by the programmers and are extensively used in South Africa. M. Spilhaus of the Health Department stated:

"The importance of IUDs in a mass programme cannot be overemphasised and no Family Planning programme has the faintest hope of success without various IUD applications. The contraceptive pill requires sustained motivation and so does the injection Depo Provera . . . Next to sterilization IUD demands the least patient responsibility."²⁹

Whilst medical removals of IUDs are not encouraged, there is a high rate of spontaneous expulsion (16% during the first subsequent menstruation). Reinsertion of the devices is encouraged.

From the viewpoint of the user, not every woman is a potential candidate for the safe use of IUDs. If, for example, she knows or suspects she is pregnant, if she suffers from cervical or uterine cancer, if she suffers from abnormal uterine bleeding or if she has a history of vascular heart disease, the use of IUDs is a danger to her health.³⁰ Thus all potential users require a thorough and extensive physical examination prior to the acceptance of and fitting of an IUD as well as during its use.

In South Africa recent screenings for cervical cancer reveal an incidence as high as 23/1,000 among African women living in Soweto, with a hospitalisation rate of 85%.³¹ In Bophutatswana cervical cytology studies done on 6,756 initial cervical smears recorded an incidence of 31/1,000 which is amongst the highest in recorded literature.³² As early as 1960 research revealed that cancer of the cervix was the most common malignant tumour in African women, in whom it accounted for 41.7% of all cancers recorded in a sample taken in Johannesburg.³³ Cervical cancer is known to have a particularly high incidence among lower socio-economic groups and is associated with poverty.

Complications known to be caused by IUDs include severe and persistent pain, perforation by the IUD of the wall of the uterus or cervix, pelvic inflammatory disease, bleeding, cervical or uterine pathology, interuterine pregnancy and a high risk of ectopic pregnancy. As many as 1:20 pregnancies which occur when an IUD is in place may be in an ectopic position, i.e. occurring outside the uterus.³⁴

The advantages of the IUDs are that they are relatively effective, and once inserted and unless spontaneously ejected, they remain in use until they are removed by trained personnel. Control over her fertility is removed from the user and is in the hands of the family planner.

The general reluctance of black women to accept IUDs is sometimes countered by deceit. One doctor has suggested that in some cases IUDs were fitted to patients without their express consent during what was believed to be a routine pelvic examination. She said that patients attending state clinics wanted and expected to be given the Pill and accepted the examination as a necessary part of the procedure.³⁵

The manner in which IUDs are put in place is important in determining their safety and reliability in preventing pregnancy. Under the apartheid so-called health system a two-week training course qualifies a nurse to fit IUDs, prescribe the Pill, administer pelvic examinations and carry out PAP smears.

iii) DEPO PROVERA (Depot Medroxyprogesterone Acetate)

Depo Provera is the main contraceptive injection used in South Africa and Namibia. Considerable controversy surrounds this drug and it has been banned in the United States, several other western European countries and in Zimbabwe. Tests suggest that it can be the cause of cervical, uterine and breast cancer. Women in the USA who were using Depo were found to have a 3 to 9 times higher rate of cervical cancer than would be expected.³⁶ It is injected once every three to six months and is irreversible, which means that when side effects develop nothing can be done until the drug ceases to be active. The protagonists of injectables hail them as the answer to population control in the underdeveloped and developing countries because they are 100% effective, are cheap and easy to administer. In the user, however, they can cause cancer, increase the risk of diabetes, result in permanent infertility and can be a cause of headaches, nausea, cramps and pain in the lower abdomen, loss of hair, irritability and nervousness. A woman is able to continue breast-feeding whilst the drug is active, which means that there is a possibility of side effects developing in the newly born child. When administered during pregnancy the effect of the drug can be to cause masculinisation of the foetus and other deformities. In animal experiments the drug has been seen to cause malformations of the heart and head.³⁷ Although to date the Government has not published statistics on its use of the drug, Depo Provera is used throughout South Africa and the routine of the mobile clinic in rural areas is governed by the period at which Depo Provera injections are given — namely, a visit to each farm once every three to six months.³⁸

iv) Sterilization

"If overpopulation is accepted as a community disease, then sterilization of healthy people must become acceptable in every sense "

L. van Dongen, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology,
University of the Witwatersrand.³⁹

Sterilization is the fourth method of birth control propagated by the family planners and it is a method which is gaining wider acceptance in the medical profession. The 1974 annual general meeting of the Family Planning Association authorised the promotion of the campaign and a pilot project was launched in the Western Cape, the fruits of which were revealed by the Department of Health's annual report. It stated that 36.6% of Coloured women and 8% of African women who were 'protected' were sterilized.⁴⁰ During 1976/77 over 15,000 voluntary sterilisations were performed, the overwhelming majority being women.⁴¹ In 1979 a survey amongst Natal Indians revealed that 11% of Indian women in the fertile age group 'chose' sterilisation. They tended to come from the lowest income groups in the Indian community.

Sterilisation is the ultimate and decisive means of ensuring the effective implementation of population control. For those who are concerned about the genetic pool, sterilisation is preferable to other forms of contraceptive, since:

"contraception, as it is today, is most unlikely to stem the overpopulation problem. Contraception on a voluntary basis will eventually reduce the superior and responsible section of the community."⁴²

Sterilisation is automatically offered to women who have had three successive caesarian sections.⁴³ Poverty and malnutrition, extensive throughout the black community, are a cause of pelvic malformation and increase the probability of caesarian section delivery. A major trend towards delivery by caesarian section has been noted in South Africa. The overall number of operations in 1977 was more than double the 1967 figure, with 1:8 Africans and 1:6 whites being delivered by caesarian section in 1977.⁴⁴ Once delivery by caesarian section has occurred the likelihood of subsequent normal delivery is considerably reduced.

Voluntary sterilisation is legal in South Africa. However the Abortion and Sterilisation Act of 1975, as amended in 1980, makes it possible that in some cases sterilisation can be involuntary. The Act stipulates that

before sterilisation is performed, the written consent of the person who may in law consent to an operation beneficial to the patient has to be obtained. If such a person does not exist or cannot be found after reasonable inquiry, a Magistrate of the district where the patient resides may, after investigation, grant his written consent for the sterilisation. The majority of African women are legal minors which means that consent for sterilisation has to be obtained from their husbands, fathers or sons as their legal guardians. If such a person cannot be located, the power to take this decision reverts back to the authorities.

Targets specified for involuntary sterilisation include "people on maintenance grants", people who behave "irresponsibly", "perpetual criminals", the mentally defective and physically disabled. In the context of apartheid South Africa this embraces vast sections of the oppressed population.

v) Abortion

Apart from the abovementioned methods, abortion functions as a further technique of contraception. In South Africa a legal abortion is only obtainable in the following circumstances. i) when the continuation of the pregnancy seriously endangers the health of the mother — mentally or physically; ii) where the child to be born will be seriously handicapped; and iii) in cases of rape, incest and unlawful intercourse.

Many women in South Africa resort to illegal abortion as the prospect of having a child threatens them with the loss of their jobs and the income upon which they and their families depend. In 1970 alone, approximately 141,800 black women and 17,800 white women resorted to abortion — either self-induced or by back-street abortionists.⁴⁵ Baragwanath runs two special wards at weekends to treat incomplete abortions and the incomplete abortion intake at the Groote Schuur hospital was 1,436 in 1958/9 and 1820 in 1970. The King Edward VIII Hospital in Natal treated over 3,000 septic abortion cases in 1970. Approximately 25% of all bed space in gynaecological wards in South Africa is occupied by women suffering from self-induced or back-street abortions.⁴⁶

The toll of back-street abortion on the health and well-being of women is enormous. 1:200 women who procure back-street abortions die and 1:4 are rendered sterile. It is an irony that a regime which claims to promote family planning in the interests of the people refuses to allow legal safe abortion on demand.

Conclusion

In any normal society there could be little objection to family planning as a constituent of economic and social development provided full respect was paid to the rights and wishes of the individual. In apartheid South Africa, where blacks have no rights, the situation is entirely different. The so-called National Family Planning Programme is being used to perpetuate white domination and the oppression and exploitation of the black majority. It is an integral part of Botha's "total strategy" based on the continued denial to the African majority of their basic rights to citizenship and access to the land. It is inextricably linked with the realisation of the Bantustan policy. In the South African context, "family planning" tramples on the rights of the oppressed black majority.

The hostility with which the oppressed majority have reacted to this policy is a direct result of their historical experience of racist white minority rule which has systematically robbed them of their land and liberty and is now intent on restricting their right to reproduce themselves. The people's rejection of population control is part of their own strategy for self-preservation.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE POLICIES OF GUERRILLA WARFARE

The People's Cause: A History of Guerrillas in Africa, by Basil Davidson. Longman, London, 210 pp + xi. £4.95.

In undertaking to write this historical study of the employment of guerrilla warfare in Africa, Basil Davidson has been motivated by the same impulse to record and interpret the struggles of African peoples for national and social liberation that has characterised his other books on African history and contemporary affairs. Dr. Davidson, furthermore, is no ordinary historian tied to library shelves and reliant on paper documentation alone: he has gained many of his insights in the field, including in periods of sharing the arduous mobile life of some of the guerrilla movements discussed in this volume.

For Dr. Davidson, guerrilla warfare is "above all a political and social enterprise with specific characteristics." He sees it as pre-eminently a form of people's war that embodies perfectly the von Clausewitz definition of war as "the continuation of politics by other means," a form in which "more or less large numbers of ordinary people have joined together in voluntary defence of their homes and lives, their cultures and their common interests.

Numerous episodes from African history have been selected by the author to illustrate the people's warfare thesis. He divides the guerrilla struggles into roughly three historical stages: armed resistance to foreign, particularly European imperialist, conquest; resistance or revolt after conquest or during colonial rule, chiefly between 1900 and the 1930s; and the great national liberation struggles after 1945.

Among the struggles of the first stage that are described are the resistance by the people of Songhay under Askia Nuh against a 16th century invasion from Morocco; the opposition led by King Antonio to the Portuguese invasion in 1665 of what is now Angola; the resistance headed by Chief Nana against British conquest of the Benin River region in 1894; the nine so-called Kaffir Wars against the British in the Cape Colony between 1779 and 1877; and the long war against the French led by Abd al-Kader in Algeria from 1832 to 1847.

The second stage is featured by the uprising of the Ndebele and the Shona peoples against British colonialism in Southern Rhodesia in 1896, the revolt of the Hereros led by Jacob Morenga against German colonialism in South West Africa in 1904-07, and the tremendous struggle under Abd al-Krim in Spanish and French Morocco from 1920 to 1926 (the first such struggle with clear-cut national liberation aims).

Dr. Davidson has dealt in greater detail with guerrilla wars of the third stage, when the anti-imperialist liberation of Africa came on to the historical agenda. Examined more closely are the Algerian War of Independence conducted by the Algerian Front of National Liberation (or FLN) from 1954 to 1962, the rebellion of the Land and Freedom Armies (the "Mau-Mau rebellion") in Kenya in 1952-56, the liberation struggles in the Congo headed by Gaston Soumialot and Pierre Mulele in 1963-64, and the guerrilla wars of liberation in the Portuguese colonies (the struggles led by the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau, the MPLA in Angola and FRELIMO in Mozambique). Briefer attention, finally, is given to the ZANU-ZAPU guerrilla struggle in Zimbabwe and to other recent guerrilla manifestations.

There is much material of interest presented here, on how these struggles were conducted, their shortcomings, and their strong points. A number of important lessons are indicated by the author, among which is the need for liberation movements to achieve a well-developed political programme, political leadership and political education. The disastrous consequences in Kenya and the Congo of a failure to reach these features of maturity are made plain (superstition came to the fore in place of ideology, and the national factor was unable to emerge out of restricting regionalism or tribalism). A contrast is to be seen in the case of Algeria, where the masses of the people were won politically to the nationalist cause: the guerrilla forces of the FLN were nearly annihilated within the country by the saturation tactics of the French army, but the politicalisation of the people as a whole during the struggle made them an unconquerable barrier to further French colonial rule. Certain similarities to this experience occurred in Angola, where the MPLA's guerrilla army did not score a decisive military victory over the Portuguese but where the urban and other masses were overwhelmingly won over by the political programme and political leadership of the MPLA.

Political Motivation

It is unfortunate that Dr. Davidson does not follow through on his recognition of the importance of the political factor, in order to arrive at a more precise formulation of the revolutionary politics essential to African liberation. There is a tendency, instead, to equate the terms "guerrilla warfare" and "people's warfare," as if they are interchangeable. This is not so, nor is it accurate to say that "a history of guerrillas in Africa" is in every instance an account of "the people's cause." Indeed, a number of cases of guerrilla activity cited by the author without a clear explanation of their nature have been detrimental to the people's cause if not outright counter-revolutionary.

The FNLA and UNITA in Angola, for example, are merely referred to as "rivals for power" with the MPLA and that they "went into open alliance against the nationalist movement." UNITA under Jonas Savimbi used and has continued to use to the present time the guerrilla tactics and weaponry that Dr. Davidson associates with people's warfare, but against the Angolan people's cause and in alliance with the most vicious enemies of African liberation, South Africa's racist rulers and US imperialism's CIA. Obviously, it is not enough just to relate a history of guerrillas in Africa: the military strategy and tactics of such forces need to be assessed in relation to the political motivation.

In Africa today a number of groups employing guerrilla tactics are operating against progressive governments. UNITA in Angola is one. Another is the so-called Mozambique National Resistance, also trained, equipped and directed by the South African rulers, which has done considerable damage to the people of both Mozambique and Zimbabwe. A guerrilla-style opposition to President Kaunda has operated in western Zambia. Guerrilla elements connected with the ousted Idi Amin have been active in Uganda against President Obote's government. Far from being conducted in the people's cause, these guerrilla manifestations are designedly and wholly against the people's interests. The fact that Africans can be drawn into such groups means nothing. Banditry, into which declassed or socially demoralised elements may descend in Africa as well as elsewhere, often takes a semi-guerrilla form.

The Eritrean Problem

One of the most serious errors into which Dr. Davidson has been led by tending to keep his eye more on the form than on the content of struggles has to do with his picturisation of the guerrilla movement in Eritrea. This movement's struggle began as a liberation war against the oppressive rule of Haile Selassie in Ethiopia, which smothered national minorities in general in that country. Dr. Davidson, however, gives no heed whatsoever to the fact that an Ethiopian revolution occurred in 1974 and transformed the country's situation: he merely mentions "the dethronement" of Haile Selassie and that a "new regime" came into being "under the control of a strong military leader." The Ethiopian revolution provided the context for a true solution of the national question in Eritrea, but Dr. Davidson ignores or rejects this political, historical fact that has been proven in numerous other revolutions with a socialist orientation. He goes to the extent of condemning the Soviet Union for aiding the revolutionary regime in Ethiopia, which he calls "acting as a great power riding roughshod over revolutionary issues in Eritrea." In upholding the continuation of the Eritrean guerrilla struggle, however, he neglects to mention or to draw conclusions from the support it has received in its new stage from right-wing, anti-revolutionary regimes in Arab states. In this case, guerrilla warfare, despite the fact that it can win localised mass support, can be detrimental to a larger people's cause upon which in the long term the local interests and their flowering and development are crucially dependent.

The author's depiction of the Soviet Union's aid to Ethiopia in great power terms is consistent with his tendency to claim that guerrilla liberation struggles in Africa in the contemporary period have had an independent development, without reliance on outside influence. While it is generally true that the struggles of any people arise from their own conditions and are shaped by their own experiences, and that this is particularly the case with guerrilla warfare, it is also true that every great and victorious guerrilla liberation struggle in Africa since 1945 has been won with all-round international assistance, military and political, especially from the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. A guerrilla struggle today, against which the full military power of imperialism may be directed, is not like the guerrilla warfare of earlier historical stages in Africa. Guerrillas need allies, advice, training, material aid and moral assistance, within the context of the unity of national liberation movements, socialist countries, and the working class in all countries. Aid from the Organisation of African Unity and the provision of bases for guerrillas by neighbouring independent, liberated countries have been important features of this broad support. As "a political and social enterprise," a guerrilla war in the present-day world almost automatically acquires international dimensions.

No Mention of Umkhonto

There is one other point in regard to this book that needs to be raised. It is not a matter that the author has discussed, but one that he has omitted, and the omission is strange. Although his history has carried up to 1980, he gives only passing mention in less than a page to the struggle in South Africa, which will be the most decisive in the African liberation process in which guerrilla warfare has figured and is figuring. The decision to take the path of armed struggle and of the formation of guerrilla armies was adopted over 20 years ago. Umkhonto we Sizwe was launched in 1961, and had had a long history of guerrilla and sabotage operations by the time Dr. Davidson undertook his book, but he does not even mention Umkhonto we Sizwe. There is nothing here about the armed struggle decision of the African National Congress in unity with the South African Communist Party, nor about the long period of careful preparation for that struggle and the many armed actions carried out. The author mentions only the Soweto upheaval in 1976, and claims for it the starting point of armed struggle, instead of pointing out that the militance displayed in Soweto had in large part been inspired by the example of Umkhonto we Sizwe and

by the struggle programmes of the ANC and the SACP. When Soweto youth subsequently went abroad to train for armed struggle, most of them went to the existing guerrilla training camps of the ANC.

Umkhonto we Sizwe, it must be pointed out, is the inheritor and successor of all the great African guerrilla liberation movements, and its fighters study the experiences and the lessons of those past struggles. In the same way, the experiences, the methods and the lessons of the great modern guerrilla struggles of Asia, Latin America and elsewhere, selected for application to the conditions and demands of the South African liberation struggle, are a part of the arsenal of the South African guerrillas. This interrelation points up the fact that, in a very real sense, the history of guerrillas in Africa is a part of the international peoples' cause.

William Pomeroy

ANC TRIUMPHS OVER PRISON CONDITIONS

Island in Chains. Ten years on Robben Island by Prisoner 885/633 as told by Indres Naidoo to Albie Sachs. Published by Penguin Books.

'Island in Chains' is the latest addition to the growing body of literature dealing with life behind bars in South Africa. Without a doubt Indres Naidoo's narration is the most comprehensive to date, revealing in chilling detail the brutal conditions under which political prisoners are held and the permanent struggle which is waged to overcome these conditions and maintain dignity in the face of the oppressor.

Robben Island, South Africa's 'Devil's Island', appears tranquil in Table Bay but distance disguises its true reality. Here the apartheid regime has for decades held captive its most committed opponents in an attempt to break their wills and eliminate their influence. Time has shown that their policy has been a dismal failure. Robben Island has been turned by the prisoners into a school of revolution and its most prominent prisoners, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Herman ja Toivo and

others are world renowned and serve to inspire all those engaged in the struggle against apartheid.

01 Conditions today in South Africa's political prisons have improved markedly since the time Naidoo arrived on the Island in chains. The prison authorities, with arrogant conceit, claim responsibility for the improvements which have taken place and give themselves a pat on the back whenever they show off their prisons to visitors. The truth, however, is that none of the improvements would have taken place if it were not for the struggles of the prisoners themselves. For apartheid prisoners, the struggle never ceases.

The overriding theme of the book is how the prisoners with astonishing courage and fortitude stood up to the inhuman prison regime and bit by bit won victories against it, not only in terms of improved conditions, but in terms of moral victories against callous warders and the dehumanising practices and values of the system. The message of the book is that the brutalising conditions on the island serve only to make animals out of the warders. The prisoners become more convinced than ever of the correctness of the principles and acts for which they were jailed.

The authority and influence of the imprisoned ANC leaders shine through. It is probably for this reason that Mandela, Sisulu, Mhlaba and Mlangeni were recently transferred from Robben Island to Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town. Yards of stone wall, iron gates and miles of water have failed to prevent messages being smuggled out from Robben Island to inspire the oppressed and boost the morale of freedom fighters. This latest attempt by the racist jailers to destroy the influence of the jailed ANC leaders will, like all previous attempts, fail. The names of Mandela and his comrades have become synonymous with freedom in South Africa. No degree of isolation will prevent their growing stature as the symbols of hope and liberation.

Island in Chains reveals the discipline and comradeship of ANC prisoners on the Island, in stark contrast to the divisiveness and indisciplined behaviour of the majority of PAC prisoners. Many battles on the Island were lost or made more difficult by those who refused to accept that the battleground against apartheid is not closed off by prison walls.

This book must be read by all who are concerned about the situation in South Africa. Not only does it reveal the barbarities produced by racism and fascism but shows that prisons are an integral part of the system of apartheid. The racists have chosen the battleground, but the victory belongs to the ANC.

R.F.

FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE IN ZIMBABWE

With the People — An Autobiography from the Zimbabwe Struggle by M. Nyagumbo (Allison and Busby, London 1980. Price £3 95)

The struggle of the Zimbabwean people has been one of those spectacular successes of guerrilla struggles on the African continent. The political problems it has raised are enormous. Some of them have not been resolved even up to today. Others are mentioned in the book under review.

This book is an autobiography of one of the most seasoned politicians in Zimbabwe. It is therefore not surprising that it goes beyond the personal life of Maurice Nyagumbo and deals with the broader problems of the Zimbabwean struggle.

The title of the book is indicative of these problems. It was in 1963 at Mbeya (Tanzania) that Nyagumbo wrote to a friend in Zimbabwe: "Some of us must remain to be *with the people*, even if it means to be in jail with them." (our emphasis). The question under discussion was whether he should join the external mission of ZAPU or not. He chose to go back.

He became disgruntled with ZAPU or to be more precise with the leadership of Nkomo (for whom he has not a single sympathetic word in the book) and he was instrumental in the formation of ZANU. Nyagumbo spent most of the last 20 years in prison until he was released in November, 1979, and flew to London for the signing of the Lancaster House settlement. He returned immediately to Zimbabwe, campaigned for Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF and in the March 1980 elections was returned as an MP and became Minister for Mines in the first Zimbabwe government.

Maurice Nyagumbo has suffered a lot in his life. As a schoolboy in Rhodesia (then Southern Rhodesia), migrant worker in South Africa and as a prisoner in Smith's jails, he knows racism and colonialism in its most brutal form. He experienced exploitation personally.

All this is described vividly in this book which was written in jail without any reference material. This was a third attempt at writing this book — the first two drafts were found and confiscated by the CID or prison officers. This perhaps explains some minor mistakes in the book, especially with regard to specific incidents or dates e.g. the banning of the Communist Party of South Africa with which he was loosely connected in Cape Town. But it does not explain the somewhat biased assessment of historical events. As an illustration let us hear what he says about the first Zanu operation:

"At about seven o'clock in the morning of Friday, 28 April 1966, the seven boys were located somewhere between Sinoia and Banket where a pitched battle was fought for nearly five hours. This shocked the white man of this country who had always believed that a "kaffir" would never shoot at his white boss." (p. 198)

And about the joint ZAPU-ANC military operation he has this to say:

"In August 1967 a combined force of ZAPU and the ANC of South Africa entered the country from Zambia and for the first time in its history pushed back the enemy forces in panic and disarray near Wankie. *But this was only a matter of two days and was an isolated event which was quickly brought under control, or so the enemy claimed* " (p.199) (our emphasis).

Simple logic would expose some pitfalls in this assessment. "Seven boys" were involved in a "pitched battle . . . for nearly five hours" while hundreds of ANC and ZAPU guerillas were involved in an "isolated event" "for only two days" and it was "quickly brought under control". Even if the enemy says this, we owe it to those ANC and ZAPU comrades who fell in Zimbabwe in 1967/68 to set the record straight. It is their blood (which flowed for nine months and not two days at Wankie and for one year on the Eastern front) and their lives which contributed to the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980.

But, apart from these and other points which mar an otherwise interesting and excellent story, the book is full of optimism and is imbued with a spirit of patriotism which in Africa often reflects itself in African nationalism. African nationalism is not always to be equated with patriotism. This book does show that. It shows the strength and limitation of African nationalism, the social forces and even individuals who constituted the forces of change in Zimbabwe. By its very nature the book cannot be exhaustive. But it does give an insight into the background to today's political scene in Zimbabwe and in that context belongs to the young and emergent African historiography of Zimbabwe.

One would have liked to hear more about the philosophy of ZANU for the social transformation of Zimbabwe, and of ZANU's economic policy. The story of ZAPU still has to be written and perhaps that will show "the other side of the coin". At the moment attitudes are still hardened. This comes out clearly in the book.

Jongilizwe

THE FIGHT FOR REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

IN KENYA

Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary, by Ngugi wa Thiong'o
(Heinemann, London, 1981.)

Ngugi wa Thiong'o is one of the great literary figures on the African continent. His earlier works such as *Weep not Child*, *The River Between*, *A Grain of Wheat*, *Petals of Blood* had already confirmed his power of vision, description and masterful use of words. Each succeeding book demonstrated his political and literary development. And now in his latest book *Detained* we get a clear picture of his principled class positions. As he says:

"I had merely chosen sides in the class struggle. To write for, speak for and work for the lives of peasants and workers was the highest call of patriotic duty. My only regret was that for many years I had wandered in the bourgeois jungle and the wilderness of foreign cultures and languages." (p. 105)

His deep and passionate concern for his country and working masses transcends the boundaries of his literary works. He is totally committed to the struggle to transform neo-colonial Kenya into a genuinely free country.

"Until democratic-minded Kenyans, workers, peasants, students, progressive intellectuals and others unite on the most minimum basis of a patriotic opposition to imperialist foreign domination of our economy, politics and culture, things will get worse not better, no matter who sits on the throne of power. No country can consider itself politically independent for as long as its economy and culture are dominated by foreign interests." (p xv)

The book under review is not confined to the experiences of the writer as a political prisoner. In it we also get a passionate account of the death and destruction wrought by British colonialism, and of the heroic resistance of the people of Kenya. Any person with a semblance of humanity reading his account will be filled with revulsion and hatred for colonialism in all its manifestations.

Ngugi also subjects to withering criticism people such as Elspeth Huxley, the Leakey family and Karen Blixen — all of them darlings of the liberal establishment — and the entire vista of colonial culture. Having graphically portrayed the racist violence endemic to colonialism, he writes:

"The . . . acts of animal brutality were not the cause of individual aberration but an integral part of colonial politics, philosophy and culture. Reactionary violence to instil fear and silence was the very essence of colonial settler culture." (p 38)

And

"Obedience of the oppressed to the oppressor; peace and harmony between the exploited and the exploiter; the slave to love his master and pray that God grant that the master may long reign over us: these were the ultimate aesthetic goals of colonial culture carefully nurtured by nailed boots, police truncheons and military bayonets and by the carrot of a personal heaven for a select few." (p 42)

For those not familiar with the revolutionary history of Kenya this book is a wonderful introduction. We are told about Waiyaki wa Hinga who, even though emerging as a feudal lord in Gikuyuland, loved his country and despised the colonialists. He organised and led an army of resistance which delayed for many years the British occupation of Dagoretti, Githiiga and Githuunguri, and he was one of the first victims of preventive detention.

Then there was Nguunju wa Gekere who led the struggle against British colonial occupation of Nyeri and also a remarkable woman freedom fighter, Me Kitilili. A leader of the Giriama people, she organised them into an effective fighting force, set up a parallel government and on January 14, 1914 she and other detainees escaped from prison.

This impressive leader walked back to the coast to continue the anti-colonial war of resistance. Recaptured and detained on August 7, 1914 Me Kitilili, who had "rejected the colonial culture of fear and the slave consciousness . . . remained proud, defiant and unrepentant to the very end". (p 48)

Outstanding Leaders

In the modern period of resistance the Kenyan people produced people such as Arap Manyei, who was in and out of detention from 1922-1962; Harry Thuku, the leader of the East African Association, as well as Markham Singh and Elijah Masinde. In the fifties we witnessed the armed resistance of the Mau Mau guerillas. These fighters, mainly peasants, took on and defeated the might and brutality of British colonialism. In the period 1952-1962 the colonialists embarked on a campaign of the mass incarceration of the peasants and workers in concentration camps. It was, as Ngugi points out,

"one of the largest and most brutal mass arrests, incarcerations and displacements of peoples in history, to instil into a community of millions the culture of fear and the slave aesthetic of abject submission to tyranny." (p 49)

But the heroism and courage of the freedom fighters was treacherously betrayed by that section of KANU which was more interested in amassing wealth than in the well-being of the people. From an anti-imperialist, national liberation movement, KANU rapidly degenerated into an amorphous political party. According to Ngugi, in the fierce internal ideological and political battles between 1961 and 1966, the faction representing the interests of the comprador bourgeoisie defeated the faction which represented national patriotic interests.

When KADU, a reactionary organisation fully supported by the local settlers and British colonialism, entered KANU, this further weakened the patriotic and democratic forces within the organisation. Thus Kenya which, under the leadership of a genuine anti-imperialist movement, could have made a significant contribution to the worldwide struggle against neo-colonialism, imperialism and racism, became a dependent neo-colonial country. Not surprisingly, the imperialist mass media love to portray Kenya as the hope of "democracy" in Africa.

This degeneration, as Ngugi points out, has its roots in the fact

"that just before and immediately after independence, the foreign economic interests, with their various local branches and enterprises, embarked on a calculated campaign of recruiting new friends from among politicians, administrative cadres, the new university graduates, the up-and-coming African petty-bourgeois businessmen by offering them token, but personally lucrative, shares and directorships in their local companies. The friends were, in return, to ensure the unrestricted freedom of the foreign economic interests to make profits, meaning of course their freedom to continue unmolested their age-old exploitation of Kenyan peasants and workers " (p 53)

From 1966 onwards Kenya was economically, politically, ideologically and culturally firmly in the clutches of monopoly capital and imperialism. Even the history taught at schools is colonial history in which the real heroes are ignored and the traitors glorified. Jomo Kenyatta, who had the opportunity of leading his people to a better and more fruitful life,

"ended up surrounding himself with colonial chiefs, home guards and traitors; . . . ended up being described by the British bourgeoisie as their best friend in Africa, to the extent of his body being carried to the grave, not on the arms of the Kenyan people, but on a carriage provided by the Queen of England, the symbolic head of the British exploiting classes." (p 162)

However there were others who, though acting from different class positions, sought to smash the chains of neo-colonialism and cultural slavery. Amongst them were J. M. Kariuki and Markham Singh. The former held important positions in the post-independence government until his murder in 1975.

In his autobiography *Mau Mau Detainee* Kariuki writes about the trying and difficult period he spent in more than 14 detention camps. The physical and psychological torture inflicted by British colonialism only strengthened his resolve to continue the struggle. After independence he was a thorn in the flesh of the KANU leadership. For his criticism of Kenyatta's neo-colonial policies and his stubborn refusal to wax fat on the sweat and toil of the workers and peasants he was murdered.

Markham Singh, a Kenyan of Asian origin, was detained for eleven and a half years from 1950 to 1961. Singh fought to bring about the unity of the Africans and Asians in the struggle against British colonialism. Together with other Kenyan workers of Asian origin he laid the foundation for the growth of militant trade unionism in Kenya.

Ngugi says that whilst Singh was a communist, Kariuki was a patriot who was not necessarily "opposed to capitalism" but sought a more equitable society independent of the imperialist powers. Although holding different ideological positions, they shared many things in common. Ngugi emphasises:

"But what they shared was a common national patriotic tradition that goes way back to the very early detainees — Me Kitili, Waiyaki, Nguunju Wagakere — who all had said 'No' to the colonial culture of fear and rejected its aesthetic of blind trust and obedience to foreign economic, political and cultural occupation and encirclement. On the contrary, they had rooted themselves in the people's revolutionary culture of outspoken courage and patriotic heroism . . . " (p 96)

In a neo-colonial country those who stand up for the rights of the exploited workers and peasants may suffer severe penalties. The main reason for Ngugi's detention was his principled class opposition to the imperialist domination of the economic, political, ideological and cultural life of Kenya. The immediate reason, however, was the writing and production of the play *Ngaahika Ndeenda* in the Gikuyu language. This play portrays the revolutionary struggle in Kenya with pride, denounces the traitors and reflects the present-day social reality in Kenya in which a corrupt "thieving" minority prospers whilst the mass of the working people suffer.

Role of the Peasantry

It was while working on this play that Ngugi discovered the powerful potential of the peasants. For so long despised by the ignorant as ignorant and by the dullards as dullards lacking the ability to absorb "culture", the peasants of Kamiriithu demonstrated that, when given the opportunity, they could be active participants in the writing and production of the play. Ngugi describes in a lively and entertaining way how the peasants responded to the play. He saw not only how hard they worked but also "an incredible discipline emerge in keeping time and in cutting down negative social practices". (p 77)

For Ngugi nothing had demonstrated with such force the real value of collective work, and the hollowness of those workers in the capitalist world who worship the God of individualism. Thus as he helped build a genuine people's culture, Ngugi found himself in the Kamiti Maximum Security Prison with a new name No. K 677.

Ngugi provides a vivid account of detention, free of all self pity. The brutalities and humiliations of the detainees bring to mind some of the prison conditions in South Africa. The inhumanity of Edward P. Lokopoyet, the senior superintendent of the prison, would make him at home in the worst prisons of South Africa. Detainees were physically beaten, made to sleep on cold or wet cement floors, denied books and given starvation diets. They were shackled in chains for family visits and even for medical treatment. It goes without saying that the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin were banned, but Ngugi was also not able to read Donald Woods' *Biko* and books depicting racism in the USA.

In reflecting on prison and political prisoners, Ngugi points out and we know this from our own experience that there are two types of political prisoners: "Those who finally succumbed and said 'Yes' to an oppressive system; and those that defied and maintained 'Never' ". (p 81). In the first category are people like Harry Thuku and Jomo Kenyatta. Both had been great leaders of their people and both succumbed after imprisonment to the bribery and corruption of the colonial ruling elite.

But there were others who could never be destroyed. One such prisoner, Wasongo Sijeyo, is typical of the revolutionaries thrown up in the course of the struggle. Without any real formal education he read widely, including Bertrand Russell's three volume autobiography, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Balzac's *Old Goriot* and *Eugenie Grandet*. He was steeped in Luo culture and is living proof that "no book or volumes of books can be a substitute for the book of life". (p 134)

Sijeyo had learnt from bitter experience never to be lulled into false hopes, whilst never losing his optimism. On one occasion, after being told he was to be released and was on his way out of the prison gates, he was told "Very sorry, Mr Sijeyo, but it was not you."

As a result of this experience he offered Ngugi a brilliant piece of advice which has great meaning:

"It is good to have faith, to keep on hoping For what is life but hope? Never prevent a man from hoping, for if you do, you are denying him reasons for living. To hope for a better tomorrow, to dream of a new world, that is what is human. But don't be so certain of the hour and the day as to let it break you if the hoped for freedom does not come at the expected hour and day." (p 150)

Imprisonment and humiliation could not break the spirit that fires Ngugi the writer and fighter for national independence, freedom and socialism. Following the death of Kenyatta he was released on December 12, 1978, full of optimism and courage. As he said in a letter to the Detainee's Review Tribunal:

"For I have accepted the lot of all writers who try to hold a clear mirror into the motions of human thought, human society and history in general This is not the first time that writers have been held for saying, like the child in the story, that the emperor is naked. Indeed South African writers have been jailed and killed and exiled for this . . . We who write in Kenya, in Africa, in the Third World, are the modern Cassandras of the developing world, condemned to cry the truth against neo-colonialist and imperialist cultures and then be ready to pay for it with incarceration, exile and even death." (p 191)

After his release from prison he was illegally fired from his job as chairman of the Department of Literature at the University of Nairobi. The government's vindictive actions continue unabated. His latest play *Maitu Njugira* has been banned and the Kamariithu group which performs his plays has been ordered to cease functioning. All progressive and democratic organisations throughout the world should raise their voice in loud protest against these vicious moves.

This is a powerful book of great literary and political value. All those who read it will gain a deeper understanding of neo-colonialism from this vivid and passionate account of its development and present-day application in Kenya.

Some words of criticism: Quite rightly, Ngugi abhors colonial and imperialist culture. But "foreign culture", whether from the East or West, which is free of racism, paternalism and chauvinism and is impregnated with universal human values can surely help to raise the cultural level of the whole country. No doubt to seek to produce plays and other forms of

cultural expression in national languages is correct and healthy, but this need not be opposed to the use of international languages such as English, French, Portuguese, Russian. Finally, it is strange that Ngugi completely ignores Oginga Odinga and other revolutionaries who have made and continue to make a significant contribution to the development of the revolutionary process in Kenya.

Ahmed Azad

A SOUTH AFRICAN ALLEGORY

Waiting for the Barbarians, by J. M. Coetzee. (Secker and Warburg, London, price £5.95)

To the frontier town of an unnamed country at an unspecified period in the past comes a Colonel of the Third Bureau. "He visits all the forts along the frontier. His work is to find out the truth. That is all he does. He finds out the truth." Beyond the town, beyond the frontier, live the "barbarians".

The narrator who explains this is the town's elderly magistrate, who develops an erotic relationship with a "barbarian" girl, left behind when the Colonel leaves. She has been crippled and blinded in his search for the "truth".

The magistrate is himself imprisoned and tortured by the Colonel's hirelings, after a journey to return the girl to her own people. The description of the journey is an intense episode in this beautifully written book.

The book is an allegory. At least South African readers will know the truth of some of the situations. The Colonel and his methods are familiar to us. So is the dilemma of conscience of the magistrate — the complicity of those who live with corruption and evil but think of themselves as not part of that evil as long as the walls of the jails are thick enough to muffle the screams of the tortured.

"For I was not," the magistrate recognises at the end, "as I liked to think, the indulgent pleasure-loving opposite of the cold rigid Colonel. I was the lie that Empire tells itself when times are easy, he the truth that Empire tells when harsh winds blow. Two sides of imperial rule, no more, no less."

But the barbarians, outlawed and dispossessed of their lands, are not a mirror of South Africans, and it would not be right to see the book as though they were. It is a bleak and intense piece of writing, devoid of any militant message. But its strange setting (desert lands with bears, wolves and snowbound winters) is marvellously evoked, and its unresolved issues remain in the mind. The issues at least are those of South Africans.

Dixon



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MOBILIZATION
FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST
SOUTH AFRICA 1982

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ROLE OF THE PEASANTRY IN THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

From Vuyisile Makhapela, Paris

As a long time reader of your journal I was particularly interested in the points raised by an article in your journal of second quarter 1981 ("The Differences Between the Vietnamese and Chinese Revolutions" by Van Tao) and the subsequent correspondence relating to it by Comrade Khumalo (first quarter 1982).

Both the first article and the subsequent letter try to explain the degeneration of the Chinese revolution as manifested through the foreign policy of the Communist Party of China in terms which are very attractive to persons schooled in Marxism. Though I offer no defence of the policies currently being pursued by the CPC I feel that both these writers suffer from perhaps an insufficient understanding of the history of the Chinese Revolution and of the Marxist attitude towards the peasantry.

The central assertions in Van Tao's article are well summarised by Khumalo in his later contribution and are:

- (a) Against the advice of the Comintern and in struggle against the best elements in the CPC, Mao promoted the peasants and petit-bourgeoisie to lead the struggle and was dismissive of the role of the working class.
- (b) Mao relied on the countryside and neglected the cities.
- (c) Mao extolled armed violence and overlooked mass political struggle.
- (d) Mao failed to build a long term national united front.

Van Tao makes a further assertion which Khumalo does not follow up:

- (e) Vietnam and China had the common characteristics of colonial and semi-feudal Far-eastern countries: a very small working class etc.

I shall take this last assertion first not only because it appears to be the peg on which Van Tao hangs his whole argument but also because it is the most misleading. It may be true that China and Vietnam shared many characteristics in common but there was one crucial difference which Van Tao either deliberately or inadvertently ignores. While Vietnam was a colony of France, that is, a subject country with all Vietnamese under the French yoke, China was de jure an independent country with only sections (mainly the port cities) occupied by foreign colonial powers. This difference has an important political bearing on the nature, strategies and tactics of the two revolutions. Thus in China the old feudal ruling class at the beginning of the century still held political power while in Vietnam it had lost it to the French colonialists. Equally in the post October Revolution period in China a new comprador bourgeois class in alliance with the landlords exercised power in its own right, to be sure with the political, diplomatic and military support of the imperialists, whereas in Vietnam such classes exercised what power they had on the sufferance of the French.

The political implications of these differences are obvious – while it was at least conceivable to mobilise sections of these classes into an anti-colonial national united front in Vietnam, in China it was far less viable a proposition unless the CPC was prepared to completely subordinate the CP to the political domination of the comprador bourgeoisie. It was therefore precisely on this issue that the united front created between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the CPC in 1924 broke up, leading to the first phase of the Civil War. One will recall also that the second united front had quite literally to be forced on Chiang kai-Shek in 1936.

This brings us immediately to consider point (d) above. The possibilities of creating a national united front lay not merely in the tactical flexibility of the CPC but also in the calculations of the Kuomintang. All the documentary evidence points to the fact that the CPC tried its best to maintain the united front even in 1946. The conditions the KMT demanded however required total capitulation on its part. Capitulation is not the same thing as a united front!

Who was In Charge?

Taking the other three points in sequence one again has to fault the line of argument of our two correspondents. (a) It is incorrect theoretically and historically to present the policies of the CPC as the brainchild of Mao. The correct formulation would be to say the Central Committee of the CPC. Mao, at least during the period in question, was not by any account the unchallenged leader of the party but one amongst many leaders. Quite to the contrary of what our correspondents assert, the CPC's policies at that time were absolutely congruent with those of the Comintern. At the 1935 Congress, Dimitrov in his report to the 7th Comintern Congress says inter alia:

"The Soviets (i.e. the peasant soviets) must become *the rallying centre* for the entire Chinese people in its struggle for emancipation."

Which would seem to suggest that the Comintern fully approved of the rural based strategy of the CPC.

A point which is left unsubstantiated, "against the best elements of the party", should have been more plainly spelt out. Who were these "best elements"? If the correspondent is referring to the groups around Chang Kou-tao, Wang Ming (The 8 'Bolsheviks') and LiLi-san he should know that the crisis the CPC found itself in in the mid 1930s, forcing it to undertake the long march, was created by precisely the policies of these groups! (b) Revolutions, even socialist ones, have to be made from somewhere. It is pure idealism to suppose that it was possible to have survived in the cities of China as a fighting force after 1927. The CPC did not choose to fight from the rural areas, circumstances forced it to do so, just as we ourselves were unable to sustain fighting forces inside South Africa between 1962 and the present. Since the CPC's bases in the rural areas could survive the repression it was natural that they retreat to these rather than attempt a suicidal course of holding out in the cities. There is no virtue in and of itself in being in the

cities unless one's presence there furthers the revolutionary struggle. Van Tao and Khumalo by this assertion also give the impression that there was no urban underground in Chinese cities during the revolutionary war. This is untrue and many writers on China refer specifically to this (Snow, Belden, Nym Wales, Smedley). (c) The assertion that the CPC extolled armed violence at the expense of mass struggles is not only untrue but absurd! No revolutionary movement can succeed by armed violence alone. The mass movements in the rural areas of China during both the anti-Japanese war and the Revolutionary war are well documented e.g. Isobel Crook's study of the peasant mobilization in Ten Mile Inn Village, Hinton's study of the movement in Fanshen, Belden's descriptions of the movements on peasants, women and youth. In point of fact many of the techniques used almost everywhere today (street theatre, guerrilla theatre, agit-prop theatre) were first tested by the CPC. These were especially vital in the Chinese revolution since the usual methods of pamphleteering, leaflets etc were inefficacious in view of mass illiteracy. No one denies that armed violence played a crucial role in the struggle but this was surely necessitated by the resistance put up by the comprador-feudalist alliance backed by imperialism.

What both Van Tao and Khumalo cannot provide any adequate explanation for is why, if the Chinese revolution was led by the petit-bourgeoisie, did this revolution, unlike others led by this stratum, result in the collectivisation of the means of production, including the land? Was it perhaps due to a spell of absent-mindedness on the part of the petit-bourgeois leadership? On these counts I can only say the case has not been proven.

Perhaps more serious is the tendency on the part of both correspondents to dismiss out of hand the peasants as "backward" or instinctively reactionary. When they try in addition to attribute this attitude to Marxism they commit a further error. It was after all Lenin himself who first proposed the viability of peasant-based soviets and the possibility of marching from semi-feudal conditions to socialism in the Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Question at the 2nd Congress of the Comintern. (Cf. Lenin, V.I. *Collected Works* Vol 31. pp240-45).

Both the bourgeois revolution and socialist revolutions would not have been possible without the substantial contribution made by the peasant masses. In France it was the peasant uprisings that stiffened the urban insurrections; in Tsarist Russia the peasant contribution was so great that Lenin was sometimes accused of capitulating to it (as does Rosa

Luxembourg in her *The Russian Revolution*, pp 41-46); in China and Cuba the rural areas had necessarily to play a crucial role in view of their being bases of operation. What the writers must also explain is why, if as they suggest the peasants are so backward, socialist revolutions have succeeded *only* in countries that are predominantly peasant in population? Even Marx and Engels, who in the *Manifesto* tend to dismiss the peasants —

“If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; thus they defend not their present, but their future interests; . . .”

were by the end of their lives speculating about the revolutionary possibilities of the Russian rural community.

The Marxist attitude to the peasant is rather ambivalent, but all the major writers (including Mao Tse-tung) never cease reiterating that the peasant can make socialist revolution only if led by the proletariat/proletarian party. Far from extolling peasant virtues (if such exist at all) Mao Tse-tung in his writings calls for the continual struggle against the superstitions, reactionary customs, backward lifestyle and brutalities of peasant existence. It was the work of the CPC that injected a more scientific outlook, a progressive ethos and life-style into the villages of China. If the CPC had not undertaken this work Chiang Kai-Shek would most likely have died in his bed in Peking rather than as an exile in Taiwan.

I am in agreement with Khumalo on his conclusions and the lessons for our movement. I would however also point out that we have a sizeable rural population in our country as well. These, unlike the Chinese or Vietnamese peasants, are mostly agricultural workers or take part in labour migrancy to the urban areas during part of their lives. Up to now, except for a short spell in the late 1950s, we have never turned our attention to the organisation of the agricultural workers. This must be seen as a grave weakness in our strategy which could bring untold problems in the future.

Regarding the leading role of the working class this too needs to be spelt out in clearer terms. Does working class leadership mean more workers in the leadership? Does it mean a greater role for SACTU? Does it mean the ascendancy of working class ideology in our movement?

Above all the lesson we can learn from the degeneration of the Chinese Revolution is the need for constant vigilance against the small but insidious abuses of power that through their cumulative effect can cause a move-

ment that showed such great promise to veer in the opposite direction. The rank and file must have the ability to renew the leading bodies of the movement constantly, democracy in the movement must be very jealously guarded, and the tendency to elevate certain ideas or the ideas of particular persons to dogma must be fought relentlessly.

Forward to a Peoples Government!

(It is a considerable time since the first article referred to in the letter above — an interview with Comrade Van Tao of the Communist Party of Vietnam — appeared in our issue of the 2nd quarter of last year. It seems likely therefore that many readers will no longer be able to refer back to it.

So though we do not intend to enter into debate on any of the interesting issues raised by reader Makhapela in the letter above, we think that the record should be set straight. Whatever impression Makhapela might have gained from the second article, that by Khumalo, Van Tao's "central assertions" are not those ascribed to him in the letter. Van Tao states quite specifically that the promotion of the peasantry as the leading element in the revolution was not the aberration of one man but the line of "... the Chinese Communist Party since it had been submitted to Maoist leadership". On this point, then, it seems to us that Van Tao agrees with Makhapela, and in fact predates him.

Nor do we find in the Van Tao interview any claim that the Chinese revolution was led by the petty bourgeoisie. Van Tao does refer repeatedly to the Chinese Party turning itself deliberately towards the *peasantry* as the leading force; towards "learning from the peasantry" (and not towards learning from the workers); towards reliance on the rural masses to "surround the towns", and liberate them together with the workers within them. And so on. Nowhere does Van Tao refer to, still less sneer at the peasants as "backward".

But what he does do — and this is something deserving the most careful study and consideration by all serious revolutionaries — is to draw attention to the differing policies and tactics of the Chinese and the Vietnamese Parties, which followed from the very fact that the Chinese Party turned itself decisively towards the peasants as the leading revolutionary force, while the Vietnamese Party turned equally decisively towards the working class.

— *The Editor.*)

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